MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER

www.meridianstreetfoundation.org "These are the times that try men's souls" FALL '07

HERE WE GO AGAIN

By Neil Handley

If there has ever been a time in the history of The Meridian Street Foundation for good men and women to come to the aid of their neighborhood, that time is NOW. Many of us, starting July 4, protested property tax increases: three times at the Governor's Residence, once at 49th and Penn and on the Circle, three times at the Statehouse, twice at City Hall, twice at North United Methodist Church, at the corner of Hampton & Meridian and at the Canal Tea Party. To those of you able to appear at any or all of these demonstrations THANKS! (St. Alice of Meridian attended all of them, I think.)

Persist! Persist! Persist!

Remember the 2004 property tax increase and its initial uproar? Large numbers of us were upset then and determined to do something about the increases. We too soon, however, succumbed to the mantra: You are finally paying your fair share. {Bull!} Aside from frequent snow removals, the limited services rendered to our area make our tax levies anything but "fair and equitable." The lesson from '04 is: We gave-up too easily. This time, if we do not persist and succeed in our protests for long-range property tax reforms and relief, we (those neighbors able and willing to stay) will again be vulnerable to the excess spending of tooooooooooo many taxing units.

Business as Usual

Already the protest crowds are dwindling. Could it be that lawmakers expect the History of Protests to repeat, i.e., let the people rant. They will soon tire and we can go back to business as usual. [I wish I could remember the children's TV show host who, at the end of a program, did not know the audio was still on and said: "That should satisfy the little (expletive) until the next time."] Paranoia sets in after many skirmishes to preserve our neighborhood. Why is everyone always picking on us? The City-State should be more appreciative of our preservation efforts. After all, this area's contributions to our past All-American City designations have been a source of pride for both the City and State. With taxes (property and income) along with declining credit rating, Indy will never ever again be a candidate for All-American City.

Where Have Our Statesmen Gone?

Where are the likes of Steve West, Beurt Servaas, Alan Kimball when we need them in the City-County Council? Maybe cream no longer rises. Maybe milk has been so pasteurized and homogenized that it no longer has cream to rise.

In the mid-70s, the League of Women Voters had a T-shirt that read on the front: If you don't vote, you deserve the (picture of Lemon) you get. Is it time to resurrect this T-shirt?

Aside from occasional street resurfacings, Meridian Street Foundation has had to resort to the generosity of our membership for additional "offerings" with projects. Some examples: Streetlights, River of Flowers, Holiday Wreaths, Alice-Carter Park Enhancements plus Traffic Calming attempts. Getting a traffic light at 40th & Meridian may require another "hat-in-hand" initiative by MSF to get that job done.

Outrageous

Outrageous is becoming an overused word in describing the 2007 tax levy. No other word seems more appropriate for this occurrence or should it be written reoccurrence. Apparently, gouging us once with doubling/tripling of our property taxes was not enough in 04 'cause here we go again. Dennis Miller of Saturday Night Live/HBO/Radio comedic fame often cries out: Come my children. Let me quell your pain. Wouldn't it be nice if Dennis were available for our October annual meeting We need him to quell the pain wrought upon us by unconscionable property tax/income tax increases?

Editors Note: As our president, Virginia Handley, is still incapacitated due to leukemia, husband Neil wrote this article.

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING

All are invited to the Meridian Street Foundation Annual Meeting, Tuesday, October 9, 6:30 p.m. Meet your neighbors and enjoy hors d'oeuvres in the parlor of the Meridian Street United Methodist Church, 5500 N. Meridian Street. Mayor Bart Peterson and his challenger Greg Ballard as well as City Councilman Monroe Gray and his opponent Kurt Webber have been invited to speak about the tax issue and the next election. The tax issue is of great concern to all of us in the historic district and will play a huge part in how we vote. This is your opportunity to hear what they have to say about our City and how they plan to make it better.

You are also invited to stay for the short business meeting to elect new Meridian Street Foundation board members.

There is no cost for this event as the MSF is sponsoring it, however, due to having space for everyone, we would like to know if you are planning on attending. RSVP to Elaine Klein, garden006@aol.com.

LATE BREAKING NEWS ~ SEE PAGE 6

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

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A REAL COOL DUDE!

By Peggy Sabens, Editor

On a really hot day, I had the opportunity to visit with a really cool dude, 91-year-old Marion Henry Byrd Stuart, (aka Mayday Stuart). Marion was born in Indianapolis in 1916 to parents William Weir Stuart, DDS, and Mae Louellen Stokes Stuart, a graduate of Earlham College, on N. West Street, across from the Crispus Attucks High School., from which he graduated in 1933.

From a young age, Marion had diverse interests. He was drawn to music and the arts and learned to play the violin, but he always believed that he would follow in his father's footsteps and become a dentist, so he studied subjects that would help him get into dental school and even worked in his father's office and laboratory after graduating from Crispus Attucks High School.

However, Marion also had a strong entrepreneurial streak. At age 14 he started a one-man ice cream parlor at 25th and Martindale; when he was old enough to drive, he chaffeured people to and from funerals for $8 a trip. He also got workers to assist him in proving janitorial, window-washing and window-trimming services to various dress shops on the Circle. He also provided Remington-Rand typewriter ribbon replacement service to area businesses such as Eli Lilly. No job was too big or small for this self-made man.

As the second oldest of nine siblings, Marion was determined to use all his financial and intellectual resources to help himself and them get an education. Because of his experience with the funeral business, he helped brother Joe attend embalming school and the start of the Stuart Mortuary, a most successful funeral business. He always wanted to be a self-employed entrepreneur; he deferred his own dreams of a college education, figuring that he could go to school later, after he had helped his siblings.

In 1936 he purchased a single truck and started the Stuart Trucking operation, which now is one of the largest trucking companies in this area, presently employing more than 50 drivers and having more than 240 trailers and rolling stock as well as a large warehouse. His company has moved many governors from the Governor's Residence to their private homes after their gubernatorial terms were over, helped with relocations including those of General Electric, RCA, Allison Division of General Motors, Clarion Health and IUPUI.

Beginning in 1942, he served in the U.S. Army (leaving brother Joe in charge of his businesses) and was stationed at Ft. Harrison, where he soon became Post Motor Transportation Sergeant, in charge of more than 100 vehicles and more than 150 men.

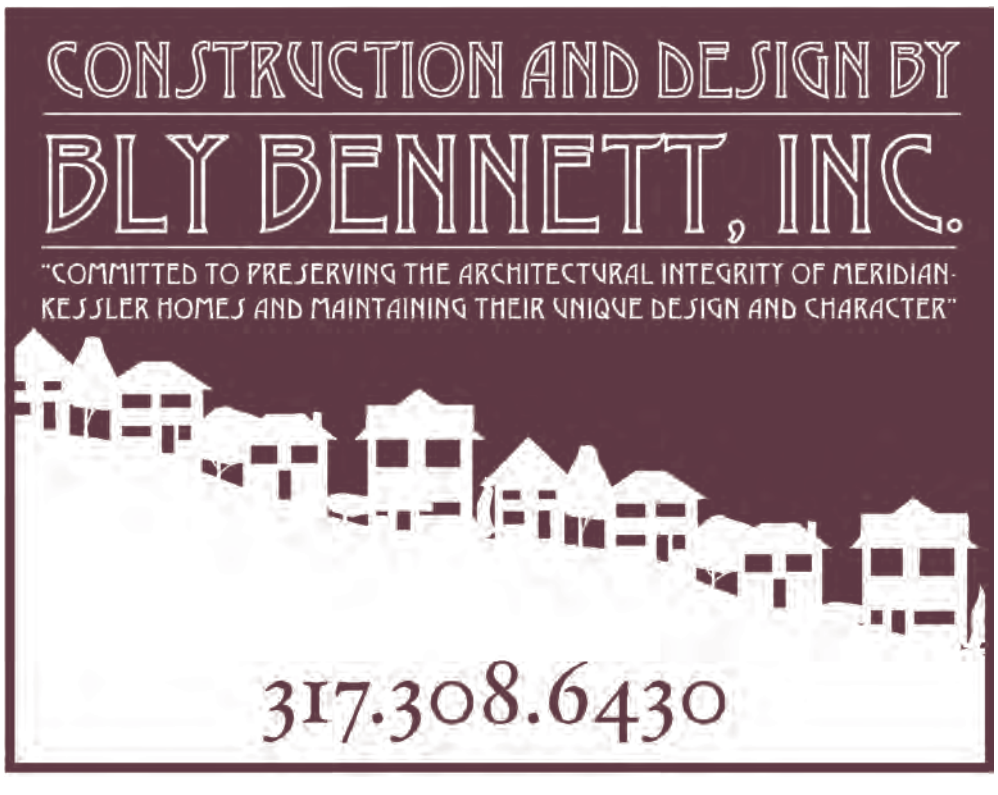
Throughout his life Marion experienced many hurdles and challenges while trying to grow his minority businesses. For example, it was only after intervention from the governor (after much community outcry) that he was given a permit to work outside Marion County, a necessary move if he wished to extend his area of service.

Marion lived at home with his parents at 25th and Boulevard Place until, at age 40 he married the late Cordie King (d. 2004), a nationally known actress and model and breathtaking beauty. Marion helped her start her private school, Cordie King's Castle, Inc., which provided black students courses in etiquette, self improvement, modeling and certification. The couple moved to Meridian Street in 1974, where they were active in obtaining National Register listing for our Meridian Street Foundation neighborhood. Marion served on the MSF board for many years and has remained active on its behalf. Although they had no children of their own, the Stuarts provided college educations for untold numbers of youth who otherwise could not have furthered their studies. He served on the Board of Directors of Flanner House Home, which made it possible for black World War II veterans to buy their own homes. He served on the board of Flanner House, Inc., a self-help and employment service for many years.

He has opened his house and mind to others, such as Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Dr. Martin Luther King, Mahalia Jackson, Reverend Ralph Abernathy, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen and his wife Janet, a former Castle Model.

Although grateful for his experiences and accomplishments, Marion quietly regretted that circumstances did not allow him time to fulfill his dream of a college degree, although he studied all his life. However, earlier this year (2007), he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Martin University. Many of his friends attended this ceremony, including good friend Vernita, the mother of Oprah Winfrey (see picture).

Many local and national accolades have been heaped on Marion by organizations including Black Expo, Indianapolis Business Development Foundation, the Regional Supplier Development Council, Flanner House, and Boy Scouts of America. He is also featured in Great Black Hoosier Americans, by Luther C. Hicks. All this only verifies what everyone who has met him agrees: That at age 91, Marion Stuart is one cool dude and as he says, "I'm not finished yet." Marion, we hope you are not finished for a long, long time.



VICE PRESIDENT

By John Peoni - Vice President

Greetings to all of our neighbors from your Meridian Street Foundation board. As we continue to enjoy the final days of summer, perhaps overshadowed by the start of the school year, we begin to look forward to our fall festivals and fairs. Penrod, Greek, Irish, Fiesta, and my personal favorite, the St. Joan of Arc French Market. Have fun while supporting these events, many of which benefit worthwhile causes near and dear to our neighborhoods.

Due to the hot and dry weather conditions, this summer has been a challenge to our gardeners. Trips to nearby lakes in Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin and to the coastal areas have provided a respite to the hot and humid weather. Whether you've been to Wawasee, Lake Michigan, Cape Cod, or Maine, I hope you have enjoyed time with family and friends, and are well rested.

As I mentioned in our spring newsletter, our board president Virginia Handley has been ill these past months. I am happy to report that she is courageously progressing through her treatment. Virginia, we miss you, and need you back at the helm. Please know that our thoughts, good wishes and prayers continue to be with you.

We have all found out the hard way, that we should pay closer attention to what's going on in our community, from City to State Government, and also in our respective School Districts.

Too often we defer to others to take up the cause. Too often we place too much trust in our elected officials. Much too often we find ourselves complaining, but unwilling to do what is necessary to affect change. We fail to hold accountable to whom we have given power, our power, to make important, sometimes life changing decisions.

In my twenty-nine years of selling real estate, I have not experienced a single event potentially more destructive than our looming property tax situation. It is appalling that anyone could have thought that the outcome of the recent reassessment would possibly be acceptable, at any level. I am confident that I can speak for most of us when I say that we are ready and willing to pay fair property taxes, taxes commensurate with services received. How presumptuous of our elected representatives to think that their constituents would be financially able and willing to sustain such an egregious increase!

We cannot settle for less than a meaningful solution to this horrific problem. We cannot rest until we are sure that we have a workable system in place, to serve the needs of our citizens.

Deferrals, rebates, etc., simply prolong the inevitable. Property taxes are due and payable twice a year, every year. How would we ever get caught up?

Regardless of whether the problem lies with erroneous tax assessments, over extended abatements, business inventory tax, commercial buildings, schools, etc., we need a system that is fair and equitable for everyone. This is a threat to our city, our state, and our quality of life. We have a serious crisis, we need a lasting resolution. Do not settle for anything less, get informed – be proactive!

As a board we continue to work on various projects and events. The one project to encompass a much broader area, receiving the most attention is the Alice Carter Park / North Gateway Project. We have expanded the scope of this project area, dealing with infrastructure issues as well as safety concerns. While this initiative is still very much in its developmental stage, we have engaged the services of the landscape architect firm, Storrow and Kinsella and the public relations/ marketing firm, Hickman and Associates. With their assistance, we hope to develop and refine conceptual documents to present publicly.

Please mark your calendar for October 9, 2007. Our annual meeting will be held at Meridian Street Methodist Church, 5500 N. Meridian St. at 6:30 pm, in the parlor. Please R.S.V.P. To Elaine Klein at (317) 283.1835 or at email garden006@aol.com. Refreshments will be served, all are welcome.

If you are not currently a member of the MSF, please consider joining us soon. We need your help and support. You are always welcome at our meetings.

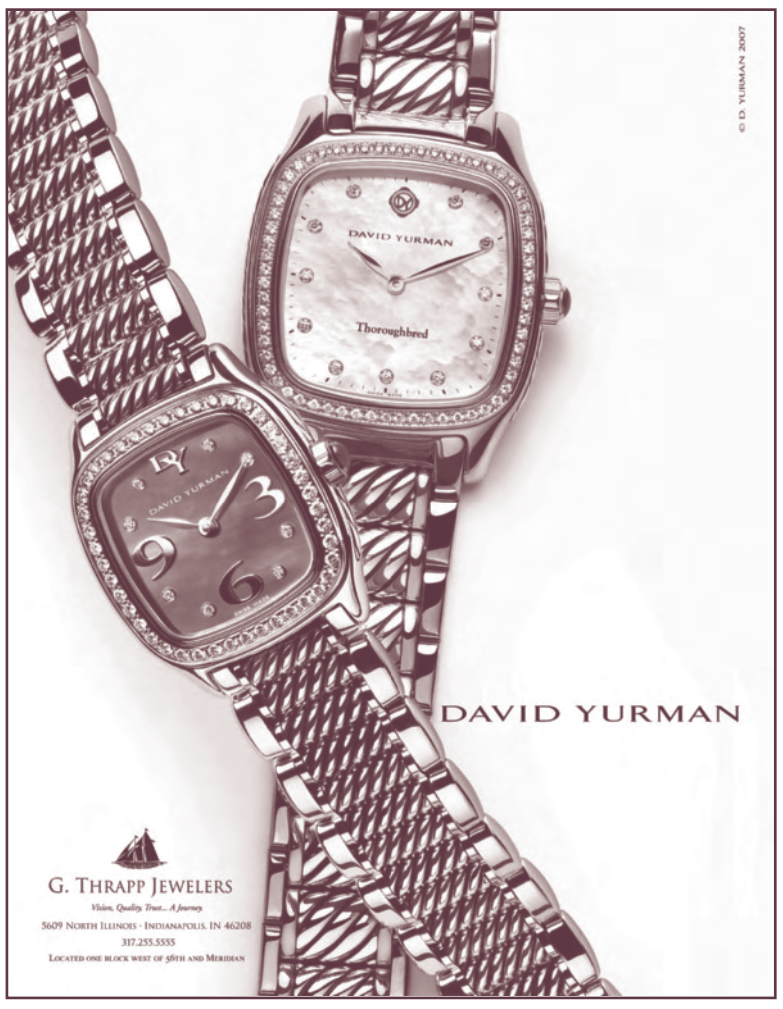
Enjoy the autumn weather, college football, a ride to Brown County and the fun of Halloween. Take a breather, the snow will be flying and the big holidays will be here before we know it.

Peace,
John Peoni -Vice President

"Laughter is the best medicine"

Overheard at the Commission on State Tax and Finance Policy first hearing:

"The only good tax is a tax on orange tomcats!---why? --because I don't have one!"



EDITOR'S NOTE

Meridian Street Foundation News & Views published three times a year is the communication arm of the Meridian Street Foundation, a 501C3 not for profit neighborhood association. We welcome comments and ideas from our neighbors. Our main thrust is to reinforce the idea that while a certain degree of discipline and commitment is necessary to live in a unique and significant neighborhood, the rewards far outweigh any disadvantages. Peggy Sabens ph. 257-3741, fax 475-0224, email jmsabens@indy.net
John Peoni, Raul Burciaga, Phil Cox, Kathy Shorter, Vaughn Hickman, We will gladly accept letters or comments for inclusion in upcoming issues.

HERRON HIGH SCHOOL CELEBRATES A YEAR OF SUCCESS

By Greg Lineweaver

As Herron High School begins its second year of operation, the students, faculty, administration, parents, and associated community members can take great pride in what was accomplished during the school's first year of existence.

Herron High School's academic program proved to be a successful model. Herron's students recorded an impressive first year in their actual academic growth over their expected academic growth, as compared to students of the same age from across the United States. Using the Northwest Evaluation Association's nationally standardized Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment (which is administered annually to students in 2,500 school districts across the country), students at all academic levels showed dramatic improvement in their reading, language usage, and math skills between the beginning and end of the academic year. According to the national average, students typically demonstrate one year of growth between assessments. However, in one year at Herron High School, students grew the equivalent of 2.5 years in math, 3 years in language usage, and 3.5 years in reading.

In addition to the successes within classrooms, Herron High School's first class of 100 ninth grade students: fielded cross-country, soccer, basketball, and track teams (as well as learned the elements of the sport of fencing); performed the drama Agatha Rex on the Marian College campus; participated in a Spring talent show; began a publications program with the creation of a yearbook; participated in before and after-school extra-curricular activities that took them to theater productions at Ball State University, Butler University, and the Indianapolis Repertory Theater; were involved in a community-service day in the Woodruff Place neighborhood; took field trips to the Indianapolis Museum of Art and Marian College; and competed in local and regional academic competitions (a Herron student won the First Annual Indiana Charter School Spelling Bee for her age bracket). The Herron High School 9th grade concert choir performed around the city of Indianapolis, and the Herron High School art department was asked to show student work in the Indianapolis Arts Garden.

Several faculty members were recognized for individual achievements. Greg Lineweaver, Herron High School Humanities Department Chair and English teacher, was one of seven teachers in Indiana to receive the 2007-2008 Armstrong Teacher Educator Award from the Indiana University School of Education. Herron High School Fine Arts Department Chair and art teacher Trevor Renwick exhibited artwork in both the cities of Indianapolis and Chicago, including an extended showing of work titled "Visible/Invisible" at the Big Car Gallery in Indianapolis.

Herron High School is excited for the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. Not only will the school add a new class of 9th graders and expand by 100 students, but it will also move into its permanent home: the newly renovated former location of the Herron School of Art at the corner of 16th and Pennsylvania Streets.

A public high school with a classical liberal arts focus, Herron High School was one of several Mayoral charter schools to open in the Fall of 2006. Students of charter schools are required to meet the same standards of all other students of public schools in the state of Indiana (including taking ISTEP tests, passing the Graduation Qualifying Exam, and achieving a Core 40 diploma); however, charter schools are allowed more freedom in how they approach the creation of the academic environment and culture. To that end, the Herron High School experience is unique in many ways. For example, students: follow a four-year art history timeline; are required to take four years of Latin; take classes in 90-minute blocks; and attend school from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A rigorous, interdisciplinary, and student-centered approach to learning is designed to meet one of Herron High School's central missions: all students who graduate from Herron will have the skills to attend college. In creating an environment that specifically addresses the various learning needs of all students, Herron is in partnership with Marian College to provide an early-college experience and create ways for college-ready high school students to earn up to 60 hours of college credit prior to their high school graduation.

More information about Herron High School can be found at www.herronhighschool.org or by calling (317) 231-0010. Prospective students and their families, as well as interested community members, are invited to make an appointment to visit the school at any time.

AROUND THE BLOCK

Blakely Berger graduated summa cum laude from Boston's Berklee College of Music, and his sister, Elizabeth, who graduated from IU with a Bachelor of Science, with a biology major, has been accepted into the Masters Program in Genetics at IUPUI. Kathryn Crabb, who graduated from Park Tudor, will be attending Northwestern University this fall.

We welcome two new neighbors. Michael Smith, a physician has relocated here from Texas and is working at St. Vincent's Hospital. The other new neighbor is only a few months old: Drake Anthony Mitchell, son of Lance and Meredith.

Business changes are abounding in the neighborhood. There's soon to be a Starbucks on the corner of 56th and Illinois and just a few doors north, in the spot formerly occupied by Baskin-Robbins, there will be an ice cream shop and bakery called The Flying Cupcake. Emmett's Limited, the hair salon is moving from 56th and Illinois to 49th and Penn.

Editor's Note: More events at 56th & Illinois! Keep tuned.

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IT'S THE SURGE, STUPID!

By Richard Piccolo

The perfect storm we are now in began in the 1990's with the Courts in the St. John decisions mandating a market-based standard of real property assessment in order to meet the constitutional requirement of uniformity and equity. Then came the major tax restructuring during the O'Bannon-Kernan administration which shifted a greater proportion of assessed values to homeowners. And let's not leave out the $832 million dollar capital improvement program then introduced by the Indianapolis Public Schools, where minimal projected increases in taxes can now be multiplied three and four fold under the new uniform and equitable system. These are only a few of the contributing factors to our current property tax turmoil. I'm sure each of you can add another. At this point, however, it doesn't matter whether you are for or against any or all of the issues that may have put us where we are. Nor whether you are a Republican or Democrat. By omission, or commission, the Courts, political influences and the leadership of our state and local government officials have contributed – one and all - to the increase in our property taxes.

During the above transition many of us on the MSF Board, along with our neighbors in Meridian Kessler and Butler Tarkington participated in the hearings that were conducted at the statehouse voicing our concerns that the changes being contemplated would have a detrimental effect on our neighborhoods. Suggestions of allowances for historic neighborhoods, or phasing in the tax increases all fell on deaf ears as the momentum for change far outweighed the minority, as well as the concerns we had. Clearly the strategy we used at the outset was rather naive. We were certainly convinced of our position, and many felt that we could actually be viewed by the state legislature as liberators. The reading from our prepared speeches, one after the other, did little to convince them, however, that the best tax policy is not always the best economic policy. Not only did they ignore our concerns, over the next few years the levies have been mounting. Currently, as I understand, there may be as many as 64 budget-insurgents within our county, all vying for position on our tax rolls.

When our recent bills arrived in July they were so obscene that it was evident that a new strategy was going to be necessary. The phone banks were running 24/7, yard signs were soon on back-order, and our protests took to the streets. My first rally was at 49th and Pennsylvania. Our message at the time was loud and clear. "Fix it!" Any legislature who blamed the other party was booed from the microphone. We moved on to the Governor's residence, and blocked traffic while voices in protest were heard. We meant business, and the message was getting through – without prepared speeches. The Surge had begun.

That was a good day. We left with instructions to kick in as many of our neighbors' doors as we could to solicit support for the effort that had begun. We didn't know when victory would come, nor what it would even look like. Having to sell our homes and move out of the neighborhood was not an alternative that any of us wanted to consider.

We began to see a positive impact of the surge. Soon the Governor froze our tax bills to the 2006 level; and ordered a reassessment in Marion County. As welcome as it was, it only postponed and compounded the agony that we may all feel next May. By the time the Tea Party rally took place, I noticed a marked change in the surge. It was a more pleasant protest. And that was nice. In fact, several of us had a difficult time carrying on a conversation with neighbors we hadn't seen in a while, over the loud political messages by those at the microphone, with all due respect to Hoosiers for Fair Taxation who organized that Party. By now it seemed that everyone there had their own idea of how to "fix it, "as evidenced by the abundance of pamphlets that were being handed out, in duplicate.

In the days that have passed I see that many people have removed their yard signs. Yet I notice that others have just been put out. Maybe the back-orders have arrived. But I haven't received a report yet on the effectiveness of the surge. Or even if it still exists. Is it over? If not, where are they now? Do you think that the Governor is declaring victory by effectively dividing and conquering the surge?

In my view, a long-term solution to the real estate tax crises that we have in Marion, and several other counties, is going to entail the consideration of a replacement tax system – one with a combination of an increase in sales tax and income tax – that will be used to fund the substantial majority of the State's needs that are now being met through property taxes. This will certainly go a long way in meeting the equity requirement of the constitution, as well as uniformity. In fact, not only is the current market-based standard replete with administrative and implementation problems, as detailed by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute Study of Statewide Property Tax Equalization, but its application to assessing property can be seen as contrary to the intent for which it was designed. Uniformity in assessment, for example, does not result in horizontal equity, across the state. If we are similarly situated throughout the state, based solely on the market value of our homes, clearly we in Marion County are not carrying on equal burdens with the remainder of the state.

Whatever you feel is the "Fix it" solution, it is clear that the message is going to have to be well thought out, consistent in its delivery, decisive, and convincing to our legislative representatives. And it will unlikely be as effective with prepared speeches delivered to stacked audiences as it would be if were instead delivered with the full force and support of The Surge, once again.

ANNE ROSEBROCK BIO

By Cynthia Lewis – Meridian Street United Methodist Church

On July 1, 2007 Rev. Anne M. Rosebrock was appointed the Senior Pastor of Meridian Street UMC. Anne served as the Executive Pastor at Meridian Street since January, 2006. As Executive Pastor, she provided administrative leadership, along with co-ordination and implementation of the programs of the church (including development of new programs), supervised the church staff, and provided pastoral support.

For Anne, coming back to Indianapolis was a return to her home as well as a coming back to the church where she was baptized, confirmed and grew up. She was a member of this congregation, along with her parents, Warren and Martha Anne Moberly. She graduated from Broad Ripple High School in Indianapolis, Indiana and was graduated with a degree in music education from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She received a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California and first served in the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church. She also served in the Kansas West Conference in Wichita, Kansas. Before coming to Meridian Street, she was the Senior Pastor of the College Hill United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas, and spent four years as the Leadership Development Coordinator for the Kansas West Conference.

Anne and her husband, Randy, met at Broad Ripple High School and married after college. Randy is a pilot and owns his own business, Flight Deck Solutions. The Rosebrocks have one daughter, Lori, who graduated from Purdue University last year. Anne spends much of her free time riding her horse, "Barrier of Fire" (better known as Bear).

The Rosebrocks are delighted to be back in the neighborhood and are enjoying being in ministry with the wonderful congregation at Meridian Street United Methodist. The congregation is preparing to launch new ministries this fall with the leadership of Rev. Danny Walker and Rev. Kevin Reed who have also joined the clergy team.

ANGER BUBBLES UP AT TAX REFORM HEARING

By Mary Beth Schneider
Reprinted with Permission from the Indianapolis Star

People united in anger over property tax bills and a desire to see the whole system eliminated appealed today for help before a state commission investigating Indiana's property tax mess.

Greg Meyer, a 41-year-old Indianapolis man who is blind and suffering from epilepsy and diabetes, told legislators that people like him on fixed incomes are suffering. His bill, he said, is up more than 60 percent.

"This is ludicrous," he said. "I have a 16-year-old son. How will I be able to help him save for his college education? How can we afford insurance? And medication?"

The Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy is meeting today at the Indiana Government Center South auditorium. Meyer was among about 300 people venting their frustrations to the panel of legislators and tax experts.

Many applauded loudly anytime someone mentioned eliminating the property tax system.

John Price, an attorney who has filed a lawsuit over the current bills in Marion County, cited numerous flaws in assessing that resulted in property tax bills to businesses remaining the same while homeowners' bills soared -- a major factor in Gov. Mitch Daniels' decision to order a reassessment here.

Price noted the tax bill for three Broad Ripple banks combined was about the same as for one homeowner there. And another bank, he said, only saw its taxes go up because an assessor mistakenly classified it as a residence.

Indiana's property tax system, he said, "is on a collision course with extinction."

Dave Bursten, an Indiana State Police sargeant who testified solely as an outraged homeowner in Marion County, said his tax bill went up 20 percent in 2006 and another 80 percent this year.

"That's a back-breaker for any kind of budget," he said. "The system is broken."

Ordering a reassessment, he said, is not the answer because that means property will still be taxed.

"After I make my last payment to GMAC," he said of his mortgage company, "I will pay my landlord, the state of Indiana, until the day I die."

Photo by: Matt Kryger / The Star

With war paint and tea bags, Peggy Sabens of Indianapolis conjures up the spirit of the Boston Tea Party. Sabens and a couple hundred other taxpayers attended today's session. Editor's Note-My pix was picked up by Associated Press and reprinted in newspapers all over the country and as far away as Guatemala-showing how threats to home ownership strike a resonant chord everywhere.

Sens. Teresa Lubbers and Patricia Miller, the Indianapolis Republicans who had called for the commission to examine reforms, both called for the partial or complete elimination of property taxes.

Interrupted frequently by applause, Lubbers said property taxes should be reasonable, knowable and fixed -- something that can't be said about the current system.

Today's public hearing is the first that the commission of legislators and tax experts is holding, with more expected through the summer and into the fall.

It began this morning with a primer from Purdue University tax expert Larry DeBoer on how Indiana got into this situation where so many homeowners are outraged by bills that have doubled or even tripled.

The current situation, DeBoer said, is years in the making. For decades, he said, homeowners got a break compared to business, but a lawsuit resulted in an Indiana Supreme Court decision in 1998 that pushed the state to move to assessments based on market value.

In 2002, he said, the legislature provided $1 billion in property tax relief, which kept homeowner bills from seeing enormous increases -- but which went unnoticed by property taxpayers because their bills still went up.

In addition to moving to market value, he said, the decision to eliminate inventory taxes for businesses further shifted more of the burden to homeowners. Also, he said, a new system called "trending" has gone into effect, which should allow for small adjustments in value from year to year as real estate prices fluctuate and shield homeowners from sticker shock.

However, in Marion County and possibly other counties, business property values were not adjusted properly, as they essentially stayed the same for a several-year period according to their assessed value -- something the state doubts is realistic -- while homeowners' assessed values went up.

Again, that shifted more of the burden for funding local government services to homeowners, the panel was told.

Lubbers told the commission that explanations of how Indiana got to this point "does little to calm an enraged public."

They want not just short-term relief, she said, but long-term reform.

"The current process favors those who spend rather than those who pay," she said.

Gov. Mitch Daniels has ordered a reassessment in Marion County, telling people to instead pay the amount they owed last year until new bills can be calculated and sent out next year. He also has said the state is reviewing other counties to see if problems elsewhere warrant new reassessments.

Late Breaking News

LET'S RECLAIM OUR NEIGHORHOOD FOR WALKING AND BIKING!

HARMONI (Historic MidNorth Neighborhoods Initiative) in conjunction with MSF, BTNA, and MKNA will host an exciting kickoff to an initiative that will breathe new life into our neighborhood's walkability, bike-ability, and quality of life. Put October 23, 7pm on your calendar today! Bethlehem Lutheran Church 52nd & central.

Guest speaker? YES, it will be nationally renowned Dom Nozzi, the Director of Walkable Streets (walkablestreets.com). His topic? "Road to Ruin—Traffic Congestion, Urban Sprawl, and the Quality of Life" and how to get back to walkable neighborhoods.

Plan to come for an enlightening meeting with information that will impact us all positively----and bring your interested neighbors!

Contact Melissa Oesterle moesterle@indy.rr.com or Kathy Shorter kathyshorter@gmail.com for additional information or call 931-1935.

INDIANA TAX FIGHT

By D. Eric Schansberg Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal July 28th, 2007

INDIANAPOLIS -- On July 4, hundreds of tax protestors showed up in front of the governor's mansion here. They've been back several times since. As a result, Gov. Mitch Daniels has been scrambling and the city's mayor has ordered a hiring freeze and a 10% cut in his budget. There have even been calls for a special session for the legislature and even a state constitutional convention.

Photo by: Jared Haller

Runaway property taxes are an issue wherever property values have shot up in recent years. But now Indiana may be at the forefront of a homeowner rebellion against a tax system that has come to be seen as arbitrary, unfair and unpredictable. What's driving this angst is the first reassessment of property values in six years. In Marion County (the city of Indianapolis), average property taxes increased by 34%. Across the state, the average increase is 24%. Many homeowners' bills have increased much more.

One thing that is really stirring anger: Marion County businesses mostly avoided an increase this year, while almost all homeowners got nicked. To cool tempers, Mr. Daniels, a Republican, ordered another reassessment. In the meantime, there will be a property tax freeze in Marion County, delaying increases for at least six months. He has also given counties a few months to rethink whether they'd like to increase local income taxes to offset the need for higher property tax revenues. And taxpayers will now be able to pay their property taxes on an installment plan.

All of this is a nice start. But none of what the governor has done so far gets at the underlying problem: Taxing property at a value that periodically increases can stick homeowners with a surprisingly high bill. The system punishes those who made smart (or lucky) decisions with their home purchases and can force people out of the neighborhoods they've raised their families in.

Property taxes also, at the margin, lower property values. Retired Indiana University economist Morton Marcus calculates that for every $1,000 increase in property taxes, the value of a home falls by almost $12,000. Moreover, high and uncertain property taxes make it more difficult to attract workers and capital investment to the state.

Gov. Daniels should not be singled out for hoping that a quick fix will do the trick. House Speaker Patrick Bauer, a Democrat from South Bend, wants to use some of the state's budget surplus to issue qualified homeowners a tax rebate. But the state is already scheduled to implement another band-aid (thanks to Mr. Bauer's leadership last year): paying out some $300 million in property tax abatement. Indy Mayor Bart Peterson, also a Democrat, wants to borrow $75 million to pay for cutting property tax increases. And he has proposed to hike local income taxes by 65%.

Perhaps the most promising short-term fix being considered would accelerate a "circuit breaker" to cap a total property tax bill at 2% of a property's assessed value. The legislature passed this last year, but didn't schedule it to go into effect until next year. Implementing it a year early could mitigate the current crisis.

But politicians may not be able to finesse their way out this time. They've been tinkering with the system since 1973, when lawmakers faced similar problems with property taxes and tried to fix them by, for example, allowing local governments to impose income taxes and doubling the state's sales tax. Indiana's property tax may be so flawed -- and the public sufficiently cynical -- that changes to the system may not gain necessary public support. The best option might be to toss the property tax out the window and replace it with higher income, sales or consumption taxes.

This would dismantle an unwieldy system where some 1,008 town assessors evaluate property values and pass their assessments on to 92 county assessors, who then pass their assessments to state officials. Property taxes are, of course, useful in that they provide a stable and independent revenue source for local government. They are also highly visible, and remind homeowners how big a bite they take, because they are paid only once or twice a year -- unlike income taxes, which are automatically deducted from regular paychecks.

Nevertheless, the public backlash is producing some interesting political results. Mayor Peterson faces voters in the fall, which may explain why he has reacted so swiftly. Speaker Bauer wants to protect a slim majority in the House after next year's elections, which may explain why he's eager to put his name on tax rebates for homeowners.

For his part, Mr. Daniels has called on his staff to brainstorm for ideas, has encouraged them to meet with affected people, and is weighing whether to call the legislature back into town to enact reforms. He has expressed interest in eliminating the property tax. And he seems quite interested in another significant issue -- reducing the number of local governments in the state. Indiana has 2,730 local taxing authorities. Eliminating some of these may improve efficiency and therefore reduce property taxes, but the history of government consolidation is not encouraging.

Mr. Daniels is favored to win a second term as governor next year. But if he's not careful, he could stumble. Eric Miller, Mr. Daniels's 2004 primary opponent and a vociferous property tax opponent, might be tempted to challenge him again. And a set of seemingly weak Democratic challengers could suddenly become competitive against a governor unable to handle such a thorny issue.

Will Mr. Daniels play it safe on property taxes or work for significant change? Now that the public has spoken, will Mr. Daniels listen?

Mr. Schansberg is a professor of economics at Indiana University (New Albany), an adjunct scholar for the Indiana Policy Review and the author of "Turn Neither to the Right nor to the Left: A Thinking Christian's Guide to Politics and Public Policy" (Alertness Books, 2003).

Photo by: Jared Haller

"The power to tax is the power to destroy"

John Marshall 1813

ALICE IN MERIDIAN LAND

By Alice Berger

TAXES! TAXES! TAXES! I'm so very sick of taxes. I am also sick of politicians. I'm sick of the City County Council and the Mayor and the Legislature and all the politicians, Democrats and Republicans who have treated me and my community with total disrespect. Do they really believe this was not their fault? Do they think we believe they couldn't do anything to stop this outrageous property tax increase? Could they possibly be serious when they said the public should attend every hearing and every government meeting? What exactly do these politicians think they were elected to do?

After weeks of going to hearings and learning the history of this over-burdening property tax, I have come to the conclusion the only solution is to ABOLISH PROPERTY TAX. The politicians will say this is impossible. They will say this tax is the only constant and the only way they know how much money to depend on year after year, I say, nonsense. They can increase sales tax and income tax, thereby taxing everyone, not just property owners, and still have the money they need. They will just have to "budget" like the rest of us. Just the sales tax increase would mean everyone visiting or working in our City, State, would help to pay for roads, schools, the library, etc. The tax burden would no longer rest on the shoulders of the property owner.

We can make the politicians happy by taking sides, the Democrats can blame the Republicans, the Republicans can blame the Democrats, or we can be smart and hold all the politicians to blame. Right now, before the next election, we the voter have all the power to insist on change. If you agree, write a letter, yes a letter, slow mail with a stamp, and send it to Governor Daniels, State House, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204. Tell him to abolish the punitive property tax. Tell him a "no property tax" state will be a very desirable place to live. The Governor is always talking about enticing people to stay in the state or to move to Indiana. Well, this is the perfect solution. Ask every member of your household and every neighbor and friend to write to the Governor. The power of the pen, your pen, could change this state forever. I'm writing my letter today, my husband is writing his, my children have agreed to write a letter. We are doing our part; now you need to do yours.

CLOUDS OF WITNESS

The Meridian Street Foundation lost a long time good friend and neighbor with the recent passing of Earl C. Townsend, Jr. He and his late wife Emily had lived on "our street" since 1957 and contributed mightily to the founding of the Meridian Street Foundation in the 1970's and continued to be staunch supporters of all the MSF activities. Mr. Townsend was a widely known and respected attorney, patron of the arts, civic and professional philanthropy and history and was recognized as a world authority on bird stones.* His 92 years of life in Indianapolis encompassed many generations and he always kept up with the times, eagerly embracing new experiences. He loved people, was generous with his time and was never too busy to take time to regale others with tales of his many adventures. He had many honors locally and nationally presented to him, too numerous to list here. He is survived by his five children. Starr Emily, Vicki, Julia Dunn, Earl C., III and Clyde as well as fifteen grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.

**if you want to know what these are, call Peggy Sabens at 903-8839*

"Suburbia; where they tear out trees and name streets after 'em"

- Unknown

Traffic and Safety

If you drive in our neighborhood you need to know that:

North Illinois Street above 40th is a two lane street, one north bound lane and one south bound lane. Do not drive to create additional lanes by driving to the right of a vehicle that is traveling in front of you. The street is not marked for this. It is very dangerous and illegal to pass on the right or drive two-by-two. IPD will give tickets to those caught trying to create an additional lane on the right.

Drivers west bound on 40th street at Meridian are prohibited from turning left. This intersection records more accidents than any other in our historic neighborhood. In fact, our Meridian Street Foundation sign has been hit and knocked over several times since it was erected in 1986.

The speed limit on Illinois, Pennsylvania, Capitol and Washington is 30 MPH.

BEAUTIFICATION

By Stacey McCarthy

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Grant

**Mark your calendars: We will be planting 50 trees this fall along Meridian Street.

PLANTING DAY:
October 20, 2007, 9:00 am
VOLUNTEERS are needed for the Planting Day!! 50 people to plant 50 trees!!

PITCH IN
lunch for volunteers…Great way to meet neighbors. Email or call mccarthystaceyd@yahoo.com 317-410-9580.

Please take a look at the tree planting guide for helpful tips for planting trees. Each tree will need to be watered at least once per week through two growing seasons with 15 gallons of water (most trees remain dormant in winter).

Lawns of the Season: Take a look at three great lawns chosen this past Spring /Summer.

5676 N. Pennsylvania-We've had our eye on this beautiful Pennsylvania home's lawn for several seasons in a row. Homeowners for the past nine years, Christopher & Ann Hilger consistently keep this spacious lawn well manicured and planted with seasonal annuals. While they have some help from Landscape Specialties with mulching & edging their beds & trimming their hedges, the couple does all the mowing & weeding. The well proportioned landscape plantings & trees complement this historic home while balancing the elegantly designed hardscape. Especially with its recently replaced roof, this home catches the eye of many passersby.

5300 N. Meridian-Many neighbors have enjoyed watching this hidden, overgrown property as the 'swan' has been revealed. Overgrown hedges and trees previously covered much of what is now seen as a nicely manicured, simply elegant property. By freshening up the driveway and walkway, the pathways into this stately home on North Meridian are now dileneated. Visitors can once again admire such a lovely home.

5001 N. Illinois-This uniquely landscaped lawn creates a cozy place for summer evening conversation. Gardens with lots of shade are often difficult for homeowners to maintain, but these lush, shady beds have a thriving periphery of hostas, coral bells, & an eclectic mix of ornamental shrubs and trees. All of which provides privacy for the cottage home, even on such a busy street. Homeowners Jim and Mishelle Coldren do their own yard work, mulching, landscaping, etc. While it normally takes years to establish such a welcoming feel, the homeowners have only lived in the home one year.

Thanks again to all of our winners for this spring/summer lawn of the season. Way to go!

Fall & Winter Seasons- We look forward to seeing some festive fall décor and annual plantings!

DROUGHT

As you all know, the drought is having serious effects on the city. Thanks for responding according to the city's requests. What else can you do to conserve water in the future?

- *Water lawns/plants sparingly in early mornings or evenings, when it is cooler.*
- *Careful not to water driveway/pavement or create excess runoff.*
- *Mow grass tall during critical periods. Taller grass conserves deeper water.*
- *Take quick showers instead of baths. 5 minutes, about 25 gal. of water.*
- *Adjust showerhead to smaller streams of water vs. full force shower heads.*
- *Stop any leaks in pipes/toilets/sinks.*
- *Use paper plates & cups to minimize need for dishwashing.*
- *Don't run water continuously while shaving, brushing teeth, or washing vegetables.*
- *Make every load of laundry count!*

FIRE HYDRANTS

'Squeaky Wheel Gets the Grease' Cliché, yes, but true. Numerous attempts via letter to the city, phone calls, emails, & even resorting to painting a few myself on a Sunday afternoon have finally led to the maintenance of most of the fire hydrants along Meridian Street. We will continue to push the city to maintain the aesthetics of these eye sores throughout the neighborhood—not just on Meridian. The maintenance schedule for painting/replacing, etc. is every 5-7 years. While some may look 'out of order', Darryl who is in charge of over 30,000 fire hydrants in the city, assures me that each is tested on a yearly basis, but not painted. Unfortunately, the salt trucks do contribute to their unsightliness, but help us stay abreast of any you see in need of maintenance.

$$$$$$$$$
SPONSOR A LAMP POST

If you enjoy the festive décor during the holidays, please help us pay for decorating the lamp posts along Historic Meridian Street once again. The cost is approximately $25/lamp post. Please support a lamp post(s) near you and mail your donation today! Any dollar amount helps and all donations can be written to "Meridian Street Foundation", a 501 c (3) non-for profit organization. Send with MSF Dues & Mark "sponsor a lamp post" or mail separately to 5655 N. Meridian Indianapolis, In 46208. Thanks for all of the support in the past & in advance! We look forward to another beautiful holiday season.

A NEW RESTAURANT "MERIDIAN"

There is a new restaurant coming soon to the Meridian Street Foundation neighborhood in an old familiar location. The new restaurant, Meridian, will occupy what was Dodd's Townhouse for more than forty years. Scheduled to open in October, Meridian will have a modern twist in an historic setting. The original log structure dates back to the 1880's and has housed restaurants since the 1920's. The newly renovated building will be a modern upscale venue with some of the interior logs exposed for continuity with its past. Great care has been taken to keep the property attuned to the historic Meridian Street location.

At the helm of day-to-day operations is Executive Chef/General Manager Dan Dunville. The 2004 Indy "Iron Chef" winner brings his culinary talent and table service to the new eatery with great enthusiasm. Trained at the Culinary Institute of America, Dunville recently took first place in the 2007 Indiana Pork Producer's Taste of Elegance competition and represented Indiana at the national competition.

Meridian will serve Regional American cuisine in a relaxed upscale atmosphere offering something for everyone. Meridian will be open for lunch and dinner with steaks, seafood, pasta, and much more served in an inviting family setting. Locally grown produce along with Indiana wines and other home grown products will be included in the menu.

MY PASSION

By Christi Malasto

My passion for animals began as far back as I can remember. I was lucky enough to have a Mother that fostered my love and interest, rather than proclaiming, "That thing belongs outside!" We grew up with dogs and cats, but if ever we found injured wildlife, my Mom and Dad would help us to rehabilitate it. I remember my Dad splinting the leg of a kestrel with a broken leg and I fed it hamburger with tweezers. It was successfully released and hung around the house long enough for us to watch it hunt chipmunks. Little did I know you must be licensed to do this…or did you back then? We were ignorant to that bit of information! My parents taught me to let fledgling birds learn to fly, rather than scooping them up and insisting that they were injured or orphaned. (One of the number one reasons wildlife rehabilitators get calls regarding exactly this subject). I would know. I was a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for many years, until the birth of our first child, Mia.

Before graduating from nursing school, I was a veterinary assistant at Michigan Road Animal Hospital. I took a stray kitten in for shots and the Veterinarian offered me a job on the spot. I guess he could tell I had a knack for animals! If there is a stray or dumped dog, puppy, cat or kitten, it will find me at 4454 N. Pennsylvania Street! They have an uncanny sense of where to go. Either that, or people have heard about what a sucker I am and dump them in my yard! I also fostered kittens for Southside Animal Shelter, a no-kill shelter for quite some time.

The birth of our second daughter, Camille, brought much joy but also more work. I stopped doing wildlife rehabilitation and concentrated on my children and dabbling in fostering domestic kittens, one litter at a time for the Shelter. I was so used to nursing my girls every couple of hours through the night that the every four hour bottle feedings for the kittens were a no brainer!

With that being said, I am *not* a hoarder. A hoarder is an individual that usually means well, but gets inundated with animals that he or she cannot take care of. This person becomes a nuisance to all. One must keep in mind what one can properly take care of. That's why I keep my "menagerie" quite scaled down. We only have one rescued dog from Countryside animal rescue, a seventeen year old cat, a rabbit, an aviary of finches and three Crested Geckos. (And a partridge in a pear tree…) When visiting my husband's 100 year old Grandmother in assisted living, I was struck by the beauty of the aviary there. It was like a giant armoire filled with the most beautiful finches and canaries. I knew I had to have one and my wonderful husband, Tom, gave me a slightly smaller version to celebrate the birth of our son, Samuel. There is not a day that goes by that I don't enjoy it. What a stress reliever.

As I finish this article, I look forward to tomorrow, when I spend the late morning introducing Peggy Sabens from the Meridian Street Foundation and her grandson, Matthew, to my, lets say, *collection of friends*. Aside from my wonderful family, my connection to my animals, both domestic and wild, is my true joy. My dear friend, Julie, once called me Snow White, as a recently released Blue Jay swooped down to snap a treat from my hand in my back yard. Ha! At forty years old with a six, three and eleven month old I feel more like "The old hag" than Snow White, although I promise I won't be offering any poison apples.

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WELCOME COMMON GROUND CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.

Common Ground has had a presence on the North side for several years. The church has been located at 6151 North Central. The North Central site has a capacity of 300 seats and does not meet the growing needs of its members and their families.

Common Ground Christian Church has had a positive impact in the Indianapolis area through providing assistance to individuals and families through payment of rent and utility payments, counsel to families in need, financial planning and advocacy and financial assistance to members of the local community.

The new location at 4580 North Illinois will provide additional space for worship, education, social and civic uses. In addition the expansion will provide personnel, time and financial resources to a number of non profit organizations with meeting space and other facilities. The new site will allow for additional space to continue the ministry and services to the Indianapolis Community.

Heritage Place will maintain offices and programming on site when the remodeling is complete. As you drive by the Church you will note activity as they complete the renovations.

The web site for Common Ground Christian Church for those wanting to learn more about our neighbor is- www.cground.org.

Let us welcome the members and the ministry to our neighborhood.

INDY CLASSIC MARATHON

The Inaugural Indy Classic Marathon to be held September 8, 2007 in the beautiful downtown Indianapolis and outlying areas includes: the renowned Soldiers & Sailors Monument on the Circle, the scenic over hanging trees along Meridian Street, numerous architectural features, and the prestigious American Legion Mall, bordered by the World War Memorial at the finish line.

The Inaugural Indy Classic Marathon has already received the attention of world class professional athletes for the opportunity to participate in a marathon to be ran in what is known as "the racing capital of the world". The anticipation of crossing the finish line at this inaugural event has many runner's attention world wide. ICM's goal is to continue to promote Indianapolis as the racing capital of the world.

MEMBERSHIP 2007

We did it! We surpassed last year's membership, hitting an historic high once again! Also, we had more benefactors (donations of $100 or more) than ever in the history of Meridian Street Foundation (MSF). Our only slow month was July, probably because everyone was in shock over their property tax bill. However, when the community saw the leadership taken by the MSF to fight the unfair property tax, membership dues started pouring in again.

Thank you for your generosity. Your dues help pay for Calling Post (which we used very successfully to call people to rally against property tax), social events (Easter Egg Hunt – Ice Cream Social – Seasonal Parties – Annual Meeting), beautification (River of Flowers – Christmas Greenery on Lampposts – Lawn of the Season) and this informative Newsletter. Your generosity also makes it possible to work on Safety issues, a Walking Tour and a Gateway to the Historic District. The annual meeting of the Meridian Street Foundation takes place in October and is the beginning of our new year. Please send in your tax deductible membership dues (using the attached envelope) to show your support of this wonderful organization. Let's make 2008 – UNFORGETABLE!!!!!!!

Alice Berger, 283-2453

Meridian Street Foundation Benefactors:

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Natalie & Russell Best
Cindy Zweber Free & Ed Free
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Amy Judge-Prein & Edward Prein
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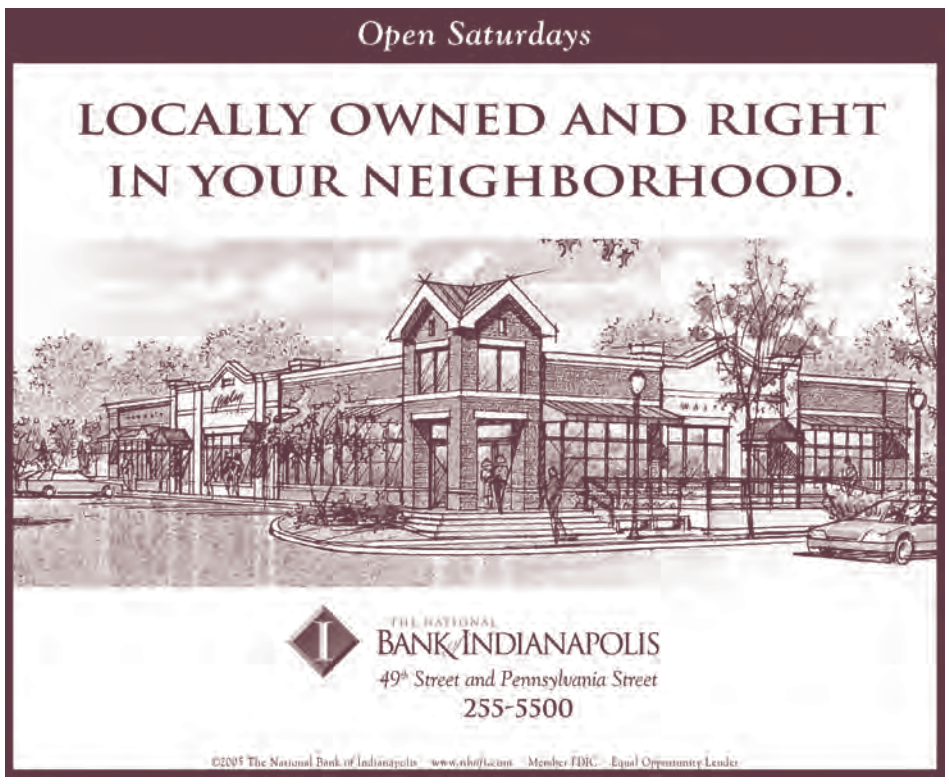

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

By G.B. Landrigan, Realtor

Property Taxes. Why not plunge right in? What other words have been said more over the past few months? Pleasant conversations about the weather, summer vacation, and gardening tips inevitably turn to the now-suspended tax bills, causes of high property taxes, and the equitability of the concept of property taxes in the first place. The reader will learn about the causes of and possible solutions to the tax situation elsewhere in this newsletter. What effect has it had on our neighborhood?

Homes have continued to sell, though there is currently a slow-down that can be attributed to both the tax uncertainty and this being the usual time many people are on summer vacation or are preparing for the start of school. Because most residents believe that change will come in the not-too-distant future, the market has not plunged. Whether change will come from the mayor's office, governor's office, the elected legislators, or the many taxing authorities (school boards, library, etc.) themselves is uncertain. Indeed, for real change and accountability that will promote some sense of stability, all authorities and political parties will have to work together. This will only happen if the public maintains pressure on all those responsible -- including itself -- and not simply wait another four years for another shocking bill.

Most statistics were gathered on 15 August 2007 from the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, although actual knowledge of some private sales were included as well. More statistical information can be found in The Landrigan Quarterly at landrigan.com.

North Meridian Street
Current Homes For Sale: 19
Avg. Listing Price: $764,700
Current Sales Pending: 2
Closed Sales: 8
Avg. Sales Price: $562,300

North Illinois Street
Current Homes For Sale: 7
Avg. Listing Price: $334,514
Current Sales Pending: 0
Closed Sales: 11
Avg. Sales Price: $356,627

North Pennsylvania Street
Current Homes For Sale: 7
Avg. Listing Price: $582,642
Current Sales Pending: 0
Closed Sales: 11
Avg. Sales Price: $557,745

Cross-Streets
Current Homes For Sale: 6
Avg. Listing Price: $392,116
Current Sales Pending: 0
Closed Sales: 8
Avg. Sales Price: $297,212

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Reprinted from November 1989 - Meridian Street Foundation Newsletter

Sun didn't set on Meridian Street Preservation Commission

The Indiana Legislature's Sunset Committee recently agreed to re-authorize the continuing existence of the Meridian Street Preservation Commission as it's own entity following a lengthy tow and one-half hour hearing on this subject.

However, the committee did accept recommendations of Commission members to make minor statutory changes that would enable the Commission to operate the a more effective and efficient manner. Such amendments will be proposed to the forthcoming General Assembly.

The Sunset Committee's hearing on the MSPC was held on October 16. Testifying in favor of retaining the MSPC in its present form were representatives of the Meridian Street Foundation, the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, the Meridian Kessler Neighborhood Association, the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission, members of the MSPC itself and City-County Councilman Stephen West.

Those persons who represented the above groups and named in "The President's Views" column in this issue. The presented a united front in successfully persuading th committee to permit the MSPC to continue existence under the present format. The above organizations owe those persons who represented them a sincere vote of gratitude for their interest and efforts in this highly critical issue.

ANNOUNCING THE 20TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOME TOUR 2007

The 20th annual Holiday Home Tour will be **Saturday and Sunday, November 10th and 11th**, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.. The tour features four outstanding homes in the historic Meridian-Kessler area bedecked in holiday splendor by premier florists from the Indianapolis area. One home is the newly renovated Indiana Governors' Residence. Doll maker Mary Vinkemulder will be making and selling her dolls and a cafe will be available serving soup, sandwiches and drinks. All proceeds from this tour benefit the children's programs at Easter Seals Crossroads. Tickets are available at Marsh Supermarkets. For additional ticket outlets call 767-9199.

KEEP POSTED

Since our Meridian Street Foundation newsletter is issued only three times a year and we have many activities and items of interest to our neighbors, we want to keep you all informed so----Please let us know your phone #'s and email addresses so we can keep you up to date on what's going on in our neighborhood. Be assured this will be used only for MSF business and your information will be kept confidential. If you haven't given your contact information, call Alice Berger at 283-2453 or email sharp2577@aol.com or Peggy Sabens at 903-8839, 257-3741 or email jmsabens@indy.net or Sheila Little at onelastnerve@gmail.com.

OUR MISSION

MERIDIAN STREET FOUNDATION

The Meridian Street Foundation is a charitable (501C3) foundation originally organized in 1960. The Foundation's chief purposes are the maintenance and improvement of existing health, safety and ecological standards, and the preservation of the architectural, historic and aesthetic significance of residential North Meridian Street and the neighborhood in which it lies.

Please Note: We live in the North Meridian Street Historic District, governed by the Meridian Street Preservation Act of 1971, administered by the Meridian Street Preservation Commission. Before undertaking any changes in structure or usage of your property, please check with either the MSPC or the Land Use Committee of the Meridian Street Foundation.