



IRVINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 2011

Volume I, Issue 1

Message From The President

Greetings from the Irvington Historical Society and welcome to the first newsletter published by the IHS in many, many years. When I began my term as President of the Society in May of last year, one of my main priorities was to resurrect the newsletter. Unfortunately, it was not until recently that the opportunity to actually undertake such an effort presented itself.

This newsletter is being offered in both a print and electronic version. We are emailing it out to those society members whose email addresses we have on file, as well as to Irvingtonians in general, through the usual Irvington email channels. It will also be available in a limited print version available at the Bona Thompson Center and at the Irvington Branch of the Indianapolis Public Library.

Featured in these newsletters will be the latest activities of the society, current and upcoming exhibits, information on recent acquisitions, as well as historical features. I hope that readers find the newsletters informative and entertaining, and that it will hopefully enkindle a deeper appreciation for Irvington history and culture, and perhaps a greater involvement in the society.

Lastly, I would encourage readers of this newsletter to submit suggestions for articles you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter. There is no shortage of interesting Irvington history, and this newsletter allows us to share a few tidbits at a time.

Thanks for reading this newsletter and see you next time!

Don Flick,
IHS President

Chili Supper Fundraiser With Washington Irving

Please join us at the Bona Thompson Memorial Center on Saturday, October 22, for a chili supper fundraiser to benefit the Irvington Historical Society. In addition to a delicious dinner, you will enjoy a performance by Jon Burroughs in character as writer-humorist Washington Irving as he recites portions of his work featuring The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Jon graduated from Arsenal Tech High School where he is now in his 40th year of teaching. Over the past twenty-five years, he has created and performed one-man shows as James Whitcomb Riley, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe, and other notable historical figures. Dinner will be served from 4:30pm-6:30pm; performance begins at 7:00pm. Cost is \$6.00 per person for dinner and performance or \$3.00 for performance only.

Recent Acquisitions

Materials from the Irvington Ice and Coal Company, donated by Rodney and Sue Thompson, Indianapolis.

Studio materials and artwork of Roger Frey, donated by Mary Frey, Indianapolis.

1904 Butler Drift yearbook, donated by Nancy Patrick, Ft. Montgomery, N.Y.



AN IRVINGTON HOMECOMING

To kick off our year of special events celebrating the 10th anniversary of the renovation and opening of the Bona Thompson Center, the Irvington Historical Society retraced Irvington's roots back to Centerville, Indiana.

As most of those familiar with Irvington history know, Irvington was founded in 1870 by two prominent leaders of Centerville – Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson.

On Saturday, October 8 Steve Barnett, Don Flick, and Paul Diebold attended a tree planting and plaque dedication at the former Jacob Julian Home in Centerville. The event was planned by the Wayne County Tourism Bureau, and the Irvington Historical Society is proud to have assisted in locating living descendants of Jacob Julian to attend the tree planting. The special honoree was Mrs. Alice Downey Browning of Chadron, Nebraska, the great-great-granddaughter of Jacob Julian. Also attending the event were Alice's nieces, Martha Downey Solarz and Julie Downey Lovett, as well as her nephew Bryan Downey, and Bryan's wife Nancy, all of whom are Ohio residents. The Downeys descend from Jacob through his daughter Mary, who married James Edward Downey, another prominent Irvington pioneer.

As part of the festivities, Don and Steve made some remarks about the Centerville – Irvington connection. A highlight of the event was a tour of the Jacob Julian Home, currently under renovation by its owners,



Mark Redman and Gale Martin.

The following day, Sunday, October 9, Bryan and Nancy Downey visited the Bona Thompson Center. Steve, Don, and Paul gave the couple a crash course in Irvington history and visited sites related to the Julian and Downey families. Despite the Jacob Julian and James Downey homes being long-demolished, a little bit of the second Downey home (formerly located at the southeast corner of Downey and University Avenues) still exists. Bryan and Nancy were welcomed into the home of Irvington resident Lori Malander whose home at 211 Good Avenue pre-

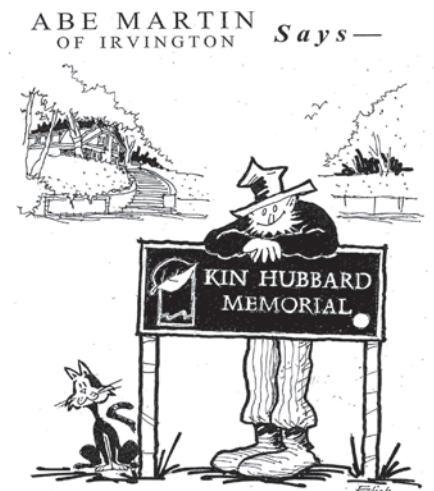
serves elements removed from the former Downey home, including a transom glass panel engraved with "J.E. Downey".

The weekend events turned out to be a great way for Irvington and Centerville, two historic communities on the National Road, to reconnect through their shared ties to the illustrious Julian and Downey families.

ABE MARTIN RETURNS!

As many of you know, the cartoon character of Abe Martin, a country philosopher who lived in Brown County with a wide circle of other interesting characters, was the creation of Irvingtonian Kin Hubbard and was featured in the now defunct Indianapolis News from 1904 to 1930. The cartoon was immensely popular and was syndicated in newspapers nationwide. Hubbard's Abe Martin cartoons and witty sayings were collected into numerous volumes published by the Indianapolis-based Bobbs Merrill Company. Hubbard lived in an Arts and Crafts bungalow on the southwest corner of Michigan Street and Emerson Avenue. Will Rogers reportedly declared Kin to be "America's greatest humorist."

IHS President Don Flick, to bring a bit of comic relief to this newsletter, has decided to resurrect Abe and bring him into the 21st Century, albeit just barely. Abe has also relocated from Brown County to Irvington, as can be seen in the introductory entry on this page. A second entry is found on the last page of this newsletter. From very early on, the Abe Martin cartoon resided on the back page of the News, so we thought it only fitting that Abe reside on the back/final page of this newsletter. We hope you find Abe as relevant to today as he was in his original existence.



Brown County was nice, but I moved back to Irvington to be near my Kin!

Feature Story

IRVINGTON'S LOST TOWERS

by Steven R. Barnett

Executive Director, Irvington Historical Society

Towers developed into a genteel residential architectural form that came into popular use during the last half of the nineteenth century. Whether incorporated into French Second Empire, Queen Anne, Italianate, Victorian Gothic, or Eastlake architecture, a home with a tower was a sign of social standing and dignity. It was an outward symbol that the homeowner had figuratively and literally lifted himself above his neighbors. So it was that many of the first homes built in the new classical suburb of Irvington had a tower.

A century ago, one could walk the streets of Irvington and find at least one or two examples of houses featuring a tower on nearly every street. Irvington's founders, Jacob Julian and Sylvester Johnson, built their 16-room nearly identical homes across from each other in the first block of South Audubon Rd. The gray brick Second Empire style houses each with a three story tower surmounted with an architectural feature called a lantern and topped with a fancy cast iron cresting certainly made a statement of refinement and established the style of house that other homeowners in the village would imitate.

On the northwest corner of Audubon Rd and Washington St, the present site of Dufour's, Julian's son-in law, James E. Downey, built the first house in Irvington in the fall of 1871. It was a small, but ornate, brick two-story house and tower of the Second Empire style. The lantern atop the tower added to the modest height of the house. Two years later, Downey platted a new addition called Woodland Place on the west side of Ritter Av. At the southeast corner of the winding avenues of Downey and University on the crown of the high ground, Downey built a more imposing two-story house with a three-story tower in the Italianate style. With a lantern capping the tower, the house was very imposing.

Two presidents of Butler University lived in splendid homes featuring grand towers. Scot Butler's brick home at the southwest corner of Julian and Downey Aves, its three-story tower topped with a cupola, welcomed students, faculty, and honored guests in the nearly 60 years that he resided within its walls. Southwest of the Butler University Campus in the 400 block of Clyde Av stood a frame house with exterior wood panels simulating stone. A hybrid of styles – Second Empire, Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic – the two-story house with its massive tower rising high above the mansard roof and chimneys and surmounted with a distinctive cupola dominated the surrounding neighborhood. Harvey W. Everest and his family called this unique edifice "home" in the 1880s during his tenure as president.

Architectural features at two Butler University buildings also dominated the classic suburb. The three-story red brick Italianate style Main Building, standing 500 feet west of the intersection of Butler and University Aves, had an impressive square domed cupola centered atop the roof. Containing the university bell, the cupola was visible above the trees from high points throughout the countryside. Standing south of this building, the four-story Romanesque Revival style tower of Burgess Hall underscored the buildings purpose for science. The tower's sharply pointed roof piercing the sky.

The grand homes and buildings with their magnificent towers are now gone save for a few – the Benton House, 312 S. Downey Av, the "Castle on the Circle," the Burford House near the corner of English and Emerson Aves, and the Horner House on the southwest corner of Brookville Rd and Emerson Av which has recently been purchased for restoration. For the most part, only photographs remain of the lost towers to aid one's imagination in a stroll down the winding tree lined streets of an Irvington of long ago.

Jacob Julian/James Layman House,

from Irvington 40th Anniversary.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE IHS!

Current Exhibits

"Tim Engelland: 25 years of Painting", through December 31, 2011

"Classic Women Artists of Irvington" (from the IHS and Portfolio Club collections, featuring Constance Forsyth, Dorthy Morland, Hilah Wheeler, et al) through December 31, 2011

"Butler University: Memorabilia from the Irvington Campus" through November 14, 2011

"The Civil War and its Influence on Irvington" (featuring exhibits on Camp McClelland, historic lithographs of notable battles, etc.) through November 14, 2011

Permanent Exhibits & Attractions

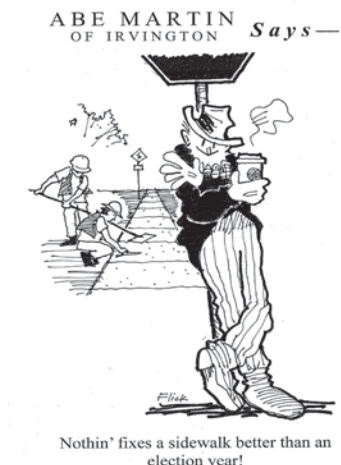
International Harvester Memorabilia

Eastside Fire Museum

Irvington Garden Club Conservator

IHS Bookstore and Gift Shop (new and vintage)

"Influence of the Railroad on the Development of Irvington" (including scale model of Pennsylvania Railroad and the original Irvington commercial district)



Upcoming Events at IHS

October

5th Meet the City Election Candidates at 7:00 pm

7th First Friday Ark Walk at 6:00- 9:00pm

22nd Chili Supper/Washington Irving presentation 4:30 - 6:30 pm chili supper, 7:00pm Washington Irving

November

4th First Friday Art Walk 6:00 - 9:00 pm

18th & 19 Gathering of Artists

December

2nd First Friday Art Walk 6:00 - 9:00 pm

IHS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Immediate Benefits for New Members:

- * Discounts from Irvington Merchants – All members, new and renewed, will receive a card for discounts at the following merchants: Annie's Apparel, Bona Thompson Conservatory, Bookmamas, Black Sheep Gifts, George Thomas Florist, Lazy Daze Coffee House and Wee-Play.
- * **Gift** – All new members may pick-up a gift on their first visit to the Bona Thompson Memorial Center.

Annual Member Benefits:

- * Special invitation for all events at the Bona Thompson Memorial Center.
- * Newsletter
- * 10% discount on Irvington Historical Society items at the Bona Thompson Memorial Society Gift Shop.
- * Holiday gift.

To Join:

Please complete the following application and mail it along with your annual membership dues for \$25.00 to the

Irvington Historical Society

5350 East University Avenue

Indianapolis, IN 46219-7009

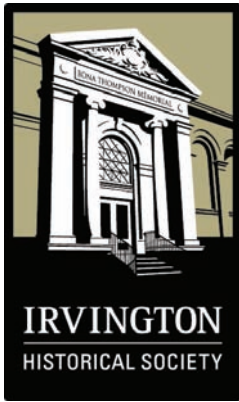
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

For more information about the Irvington Historical Society visit www.irvingtonhistorical.org.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011

An Irvington Halloween Festival Event

To Benefit the

Irvington Historical Society

at the

**Bona Thompson Memorial Center
5350 University Avenue**





CHILI SUPPER:

Serving 4:30 to 6:30 pm

\$6.00 per Person, at the door

Includes Bowl of Chili, Cole Slaw, Drink, and Brownie
(Cheese & Crackers, if desired)

Admission to Washington Irving Presentation, by hand stamp



WASHINGTON IRVING:

7:00 pm

\$3.00 Adults; \$1.00 Students/ Children

Free admission if hand is stamped from the chili supper



Readings & Stories by Jon Burroughs as Washington Irving,
featuring

“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

All proceeds will go toward the maintenance and upkeep of the
Bona Thompson Memorial Center.

Membership to the IHS is always available. It is an important way to say
you support our mission, and a bargain at \$25 per household.



*Please join us for this special
Irvington Halloween Festival event!*