Friends of Wylie House gathered on April 11 for the kick off event of our first ever major fundraising campaign. Co-chairs of our fundraising committee Judy O’Bannon, former First Lady of Indiana, and Pat Ryan, former First Lady of IU, were featured speakers. Seated in the parlor, guests heard from museum director, Jo Burgess, about our fundraising goals including the need for an endowment to support increased educational programming and future maintenance of both the museum and our new Education Center. Mrs. Ryan recounted some of her memories about the early days of Wylie House when Dr. Herman B Wells and IU Archivist Mary Craig were instrumental in establishing the museum. Mrs. O’Bannon, a noted supporter of historic preservation, gave a lively talk about the importance of preserving historic buildings and how historic house museums like the Wylie House can educate the public about the past and why that is important. Among other things she had this to say, “The Victorian Era was a time of great change: new technologies were being developed, new discoveries and advances in science were being made, women’s roles were changing for the better.

Not Yet Under Construction...

We had hoped to be well under way with the construction of the Morton Bradley Education Center by this time. However, as often happens with building projects, there have been some unexpected delays. We’re still waiting to have some utilities moved from the alley where the new building will sit and it has taken longer than we expected to have the final plans drawn up and sent out for bid. We don’t have a new estimate on our start date as of this writing, but we’re still hopeful that it will be early this summer.
From the Director......

As the Spring Semester winds down, I’d like to say a special thank you to our current student assistants. Aimee Rose Formo has been with us all year as a Graduate Assistant from the School of Library and Information Science. Her experience working at Monticello plus her keen interest in historic textiles and costumes has been of immense help to us. Not only has Aimee given great tours to visitors and helped us during special, costumed events, she has sewn two dresses for us, worked on our website, assisted with the online catalogue and database projects, scanned and researched a manuscript collection of embroidery patterns from the 1820s and 30s, helped organize our textile collection and worked on various other projects. We’re very pleased that she will return to do an internship during second summer session.

Jennifer Fowle, another SLIS student, is finishing up a semester-long internship. She has worked on our database project, but the bulk of her time here has been spent organizing and scanning a collection of photographs taken by Anton Boisen, great-grandson of Theophilus Wylie, during the years 1904-1916, and creating a virtual exhibit for our website.

Both these young women have proven themselves very capable and efficient. Their positive, upbeat attitudes have made them a pleasure to have in the office and we all appreciate their efforts. We have consistently had excellent student interns here at Wylie House, most from the School of Library and Information Science, but also from other departments such as Folklore and History. Student involvement is very important to us and we are grateful to them all.

—Jo Burgess

From the Garden...

Thanks to all who helped make the annual Wylie House heirloom seed sale a success! A record number, 250 visitors supported the museum by purchasing more than $1250 in seeds at the one day event. Thanks also to those who helped clean and package seed in advance of the sale.

Several varieties of flowers, grown from seed purchased at Monticello, former home of Thomas Jefferson, are now “history.” Cup and saucer vine, clarkia and tall foxglove started in early March were thriving, enjoying a so-called protected location on the front porch of the Wylie House Annex. Making my daily rounds, watering can in hand, thinking it was just a few more days until the soil would be warm enough for seedlings to be planted outdoors, I could not believe my eyes—pots recently containing lush starts were now completely empty. Who or what had played such a mean trick on me? A bird or ground squirrel looking for nesting material? No sign of any clues until the following morning when I saw my beautiful pot of coleus reduced to half size. Upon closer inspection, I spied the culprit—a four inch, adorable baby bunny, sitting in the pot, nose wiggling, munching away on what was left of the colorful foliage. Too small for stew, I shrug my shoulders and leave the little darlin’...

(Continued on page 4)

Outreach

From the Curator of Education....

I recently completed a month-long collaboration with five juniors at Bloomington High School South and two of their teachers the purpose of which was to explore some of the historical links between Seminary Square and their school.* This project culminated in a multimedia presentation made by the students for their classmates that included several GIS aerial maps of Seminary Square between 1949 and 1975, vintage film footage of the old BHS campus from 1947 (footage I didn’t know existed!), a Then-and-Now PowerPoint retrospective touching on civil rights, disabilities, sports, dating, school clubs, local hang-outs and other important social topics. It also included two large poster board exhibits, the first of which focused on hair and apparel fashions at BHS during the 1960s and 70s complete with Robin Stroud’s contemporary replication of “senior cords,” and the second illustrating the devastating fire of 1967, an event that brought an end to over 140 years of education at Seminary Square. That era began with the opening of the “Indiana Seminary” in 1824 followed soon after by the chartering of Indiana College and the hire of Dr. Andrew Wylie as its first President. Bloomington High School South now sits on land originally owned by Andrew Wylie. It was sold to the school corporation by his descendants in 1963.

The students’ presentation was framed by the memories given during a three hour interview with former BHS alumni Doug and Allene Bilodeau who graduated from BHS in 1964 and ’65. It was through the interview that the students realized the importance of the changes that were taking place during the 60s. “I don’t know why, but we didn’t realize it at first. It wasn’t until after the interview and the research we did that followed. Doug said most of the big changes happened between 1963 and ’68, and he was right. The changes were HUGE, drastic! We looked back at the yearbooks, newspaper articles, and photos. You can see it -- the changing fashions, the protests, questioning au...

(Continued on page 3)
They were trying to broaden the rules that were set upon them. It’s really fascinating to see how quickly that all changed. If you continue to look at our culture in the future and now more towards the present, it doesn’t ever change that quickly again,” said Megan Davis.

Josh Brewster was interested in exploring old photographs of Seminary Square and its surrounding environs. “I liked looking at the old photos because you can see how much the site has changed over the years, and how little of the original campus is left. All that’s left now is this little 2 acre corner up here that’s become Seminary Park. But this place is really important to the history of Bloomington. I mean Bloomington exists because of IU so there’s a lot of important history here,” he said as he projected several old aerial photos of Seminary Square for his classmates to see.

“I had a lot of fun with this project, especially with the interview. I didn’t really expect them to be so open with us. This is the kind of information you can’t find in historical documents,” said Megan. Allene also expressed their delight with this intergenerational exchange. “We had so much fun with them, and the experience made me think of many other things I wanted to tell them after they’d left. I was never one for dates, events, you know, the big names in history. But the lives of the people, with ordinary everyday things, well, that fascinates me.”

We hope to do a longer term project next fall that will involve more students and tackle other historic topics and connections. “They obviously learned a great deal from this experience. It isn’t very often that students are able to really get involved in primary source research as they did. It was wonderful,” said Pam Gunkle, an American History teacher at BHSS.

Towards the end of their presentation, Megan Davis nicely summed up the group’s motivation for undertaking this project. “We did this project because we wanted to learn about what it was like back in the 60s at Bloomington High School. We shouldn’t forget how much we’ve changed, why the changes have happened and why they’re important. It was interesting to see what has changed for the good and what has changed for the bad. We’re not that different from those people in the 60s who had to obey all those rules. We have rules now too, but they’re just a little more lenient. It was really nice to see how far we’ve come in terms of civil and political issues. Many of the things that were issues then are still with us today, but they approached them so differently back then. And this project was local so it was something all of us could relate to more. We thought it would be good for people at our school to realize that, to realize where we’ve come from.” Indeed! These kinds of projects and realizations are what feed all of us working with historic materials.

*Project participants included students Josh Brewer, Megan Davis, Marlene Habermann, Robin Stroud and Sammi Kirk; interviewees Allene Newberg Bilodeau and Doug Bilodeau; and teachers Carla Gardner and Pam Gunkle.

—Bridget Edwards, Curator of Education

waves of immigrants were coming into our country and bringing bits of their own culture with them. When you walk into a house like this, you aren’t just faced with facts and figures, you experience what it felt like to live in the Victorian Era. Why should we care about the past? Because many of the issues people dealt with then are the same as the issues we are faced with today. It’s comforting to know that they faced those changes and didn’t perish, they faced those crises and didn’t perish. We can be inspired and motivated by their stories and use them as our impetus for action in our own lives so that future generations will be able to learn from the past as well.”

Guests were invited to tour the house to see the changes that have been wrought over the past seven years and to partake of tea, served in the dining room by Carol Schlarb and Susan Nance of Select Tea Company of Indianapolis who also spoke about the history of tea and how to correctly brew it.

For information about our campaign and how you can help preserve this historic site, please contact Susan Yoon in the Libraries Development Office. (812.855.4182)

We have, however, made progress inside the museum. The small room over the entry hall that we refer to as the boarders’ room or the sick room was painted in February and the room over the kitchen that we call the guest room, was painted in early April. Both rooms have new window treatments. The boys’ bedroom should be done by the time you read this.

Work will continue upstairs until all the rooms have been painted and have new window treatments. This is going to make a very striking difference to the appearance of the house and we encourage you all to come have a look for yourselves!
Welcome new volunteers

We take great pleasure in welcoming some new volunteers to our ranks. Daniel Williams is an IU student with an interest in gardening who has been helping Sherry with seed cleaning and packaging.

Cisa Kubley is a local resident who is very involved with the re-enactment community. An excellent seamstress, she has made a corded petticoat for the museum and may do more sewing for us in the future.

Mary Anne Miller, who has an interest in historic sites, has joined us as a volunteer docent in the museum, giving tours to the public.

Volunteering

- Do you like history, antiques and a pleasant, tranquil setting? Learn to be a docent at the Wylie House.
- Have limited time? Help with special events at the museum.
- Do you prefer to spend your time in the garden? Lend a hand in our heirloom garden.

If you live in the Bloomington area and would like to become more actively involved with the museum, please call and chat with us about the opportunities.

Docents and Volunteers:

Jane Clay, Mary Emison, Jane Harnett, Rachel Kosmitis, Cisa Kubley, Naomi Lawlis, Mary Anne Miller, Sarah Noggle, Cindy Smith

Garden Volunteers:

Ross Hill, Lee Ridge, Floyd Richards, Barbara Roberts, Eve Schultes-Ridge, Daniel Williams

Quilters:

Marjorie Clayton, Diamond Mather, Virginia Miller, Ellen Pittman

(Continued from page 2)

to eat in peace, thankful that I had already planted the historic pansy varieties and double white stocks. Wonder what other surprises Mother Nature has in store this growing season?

—Sherry Wise, Outdoor Interpreter