From the Interim Director

Carey Beam

Autumn is such an exciting time here at the Wylie House. IU students have returned and our calendar is filled with course visits, research projects, recital performances in the parlor, and elementary school group tours. This fall also brings the anticipation of the December open house: Wylie House by Candlelight. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, Dec. 7th, 5-8pm. We look forward to welcoming guests to enjoy the home by candlelight and then receiving them in the education center for entertainment and refreshments.

In addition to all of the students visiting the museum for class tours and research, students from the Information and Library Science and the Arts Administration graduate programs are working on exhibitions and projects related to the museum and the Wylie family archival collections. IU Jacobs School of Music string quartets and Early Music Institute students are using the museum parlor for recitals. Our volunteers have been busy as well, preparing for the candlelight open house, collecting heirloom seeds from the garden, and assisting with class tours.

The museum and the Morton C. Bradley, Jr. Education Center are providing a variety of educational, research, and volunteer opportunities for students, faculty, and community members. In return, the museum is benefiting from their scholarship, expertise, and creativity, and together we are doing our best to make this historic house museum and special collection repository thrive. The dedication of so many wonderful people is what makes Wylie House such a unique and special place.

Special thanks to watercolor artist Deborah Rush.

Click “Give Now” to donate to Wylie House Museum
News

Building News

Painting the House

The Wylie House has been crawling with painters this fall. The museum is getting a fresh coat of exterior paint on the windows, doors, and porches. The paint job is coming on the heels of the completion of the new cedar shake roof. It has been a big year for the upkeep of this historic property, and the museum is going to look its very best when it is all finished.

Weaving a New Rug

A new rag rug is in the works for the smallest of the museum bedrooms. Its current rug has served us well for nearly twenty years, but it has begun to wear thin. The Wylie House quilters are contributing to the new rug with fabric strips from their personal collections, making it a very special addition to the museum. More important, it is their Bloomington Be More Award money that will allow us to engage Brown County weaver Chris Gustin in the creation of the rug. Be on the lookout for pictures of the new rug in the spring newsletter.

Collections News

As a member of the Alliance of Bloomington Museums, the Wylie House is participating in a joint exhibition on display at the Monroe County History Center. Each of the member museums contributed artifacts to represent their institution. Some of our favorite Wylie family pieces are being featured as part of this exhibition. We miss showing them off here but are happy they get some time “on the road” to draw new visitors to the museum.

Concerts in the Parlor

The museum is delighted to be hosting IU Jacobs School of Music performances in the house’s parlor. They are free and open to the public, and we hope you’ll join us for two upcoming concerts this early winter. The house comes alive when these musicians share their talent!

Pacifica Quartet’s Student String Quartet:
Saturday, Nov. 16th, 3:00 pm

Early Music Institute’s Classical Wind Ensemble:
Friday, Dec. 6th, 12:00pm

Historic Preservation in Indiana

Recently published by the IU Press, this collection, edited by Nancy R. Hiller, features the work of many luminaries in the Bloomington preservation community, including great friend of Wylie House, volunteer, and advocate Gayle Cook.
Academics

Interns and Volunteers

We are fortunate that the best and brightest IU students find their way to Wylie House. Abi Parker, graduate assistant, is on board with us for the entire academic year, hard at work managing visitor data and overseeing an archival project in collaboration with IU’s Preservation Department.

For the first time, the museum is partnering with the Arts Administration program to offer graduate students practicum opportunities focused on small museum management projects. Frances Winfrey is our inaugural participant, focusing her practicum on an inventory management plan.

IU Classes

The museum has been bustling with student activity this fall. Classes from various departments have returned to study everything from Indiana history to interpretation of cultural heritage sites, and many are discovering the museum for the first time. For instance, this is Religious Studies faculty member Lisa Sideris’ inaugural semester including Wylie House as a volunteer project site for her Pleasure, Pain, and Peak Oil course this semester. She is asking her students to determine what “the good life” is and whether the Wylie family had it.

In September, IU instructor Brian Forist brought his Interpretation and Tour Guiding class to Wylie House. Students had the opportunity to observe tours given both in period attire and in modern dress. Reaction to interpretation done in period garden garb was favorable, deemed by some to be “more relevant to the site and information covered.”

Student Groups

Members of the Finer Things Club in the Department of Information and Library Science are committed to making the most of their graduate experience. The Wylie House was honored to be chosen by the group as a choice destination and hosted a tour and an afternoon of tea and conversation related to professional opportunities in the library science and archives fields.

Members of the IU Student Archive Association recently spent a Saturday at the museum and education center. In addition to the tour of the Wylie home, these students spent time perusing the archival collections, gaining insights into the storage and arrangement of our on-site collections, as well as how we plan to make the collections more accessible to students and researchers in the future.

Outdoor Interpreter Sherry Wise leads an IU Parks and Recreation class through the gardens to discuss the historic grounds and the role they play in interpreting 19th century life.

Bringing History Home

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From the Garden

Sherry Wise, Outdoor Interpreter

A Different Kind of House Painting

Members of the Bloomington Watercolor Society arrived on a lovely Saturday morning to sketch and paint scenes of the museum and grounds. Docents in period attire offered house tours and posed for artists.

Boys and Girls Club Visit

In June, campers from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bloomington came for a lesson on planting a vegetable garden. Activities included cleaning and packaging seeds from Wylie House, which the kids took to plant at home. Heirloom seeds were also donated to the club for use at Camp Rock, a traditional outdoor day camp organized by the Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington.

Deer in Wylie House Garden

Heirloom gardens drew visitors of many kinds to Wylie House this summer. Some came to learn about gardening and seed saving, while others appeared in the night to munch on veggie plants and tasty produce. Footprints, plus an afternoon visit by two spotted fawns, identified the source of our disappearing produce. Wildlife netting placed over bean, pepper, squash and tomato plants proved to be a good solution, allowing deer to browse without endangering our seed saving project.

Lilies and coneflowers thriving in the sun.

Bloomington Watercolor Society’s visit to the museum and gardens.

Our regular summer visitors: cute but damaging to the gardens.
From the Garden cont.

A Tradition of Saving Seeds

A seed saving workshop, sponsored by Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard, was held at Wylie House. Demonstrations of seed cleaning and processing methods were well received. Those in attendance took home starts of “walking onions” for their garden patches.

Wylie House’s Annual Heirloom Seed Sale is set for Saturday, March 1st, 2014. The event will be held on the main floor of the barn.

Garden volunteer Barb Seel carefully eradicating invasive honeysuckle from the garden.

Garden Path with walking onions in lower left corner.

Garden Guest.