

## Preservation Wayne VIP News – August, 2003 (revised 8/17/03)

**Welcome** to the fourth edition of the 2003 **VIP (Volunteers in Preservation)** Newsletter. Lots going on!! Tour season is in full swing – the Saturday/Tuesday tours continue, the Theater Tour is coming up on August 16 (**now being rescheduled due to the power outage**), and plans are underway for the Festival of the Arts on September 12 – 14 and Pedestrian Connection II (sponsored by the Detroit Synergy Group) on September 26.

### VIP News this month

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### Notes from the Board

**Theatre Tour** – PW’s 15<sup>th</sup> annual Theatre Tour is scheduled for **August 16**. (**NOTE – due to the power outage beginning on August 14, this tour was cancelled. Plans are underway to reschedule, possibly for September 6. Stay tuned...**) Tours will run every half-hour from 9:00 am to 11:30 am, with a similar format as last year. Besides seeing ‘behind the scenes’ of 7 Theatres in the Grand Circus Park area, there will be a slide show about the Theatre district at the State, a movie memorabilia exhibit at the Opera House, and a fun organ concert on the Mighty Wurlitzer rounding out the tour at the Fox. You may also get a chance to see a few minutes of a dress rehearsal of one of the Learning at the Opera House productions.

This tour is only held once a year and is very popular - it has sold out for the past two years. New this year will be seeing the renovations that Clear Channel is making to the State Theatre and we’ll be able to see the completed works of the decorative painting that were in progress last year at the Opera House.

New Guides and Shepherds should remember that you can take PW tours for free (however, you will have to pay for your lunch on this tour – price will be approximately \$10 - or you can do lunch on your own.) Just be sure to sign up ahead of time for the tour!! (And wear your nametag!!)

**Festival of the Arts.** PW continues the mini-tours of Ferry Avenue mansions during the Festival (September 12 – 14 - PW tours on Sat/Sun and Booth support people are also needed for all three days during Festival hours.) PW Tours will focus on the Hecker-Smiley Mansion, the Freer House, and perhaps the Beecher House and the Omega Psi Chi fraternity. We may also be able

to see the work that PW award winner Julio Bateau has done, in a real success story, with the Caribbean Cultural Center and his efforts in rehabbing the block, one building at a time. More info on the Festival can be found at [www.detroitfestival.com](http://www.detroitfestival.com)

**Thanks to Tastefest volunteers!!** Preservation Wayne VIPs participated in the “City Living” tent at the Fourth of July Weekend Tastefest again this year in the beautiful New Center area. Walking tour brochures and storyboards, theatre tour flyers and other PW PR materials were promoted. At the event’s end most of the brochures and flyers were gone – let’s hope that was a sign of increased attendance for our tours. Thanks to everyone who stopped by to help on their holiday weekend to represented PW at the Tastefest!

## Visit from the Executive Director of the Midwest office of the NTHP

Preservation Wayne welcomed **Royce Yeater, the Executive Director of the Midwest office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation** for two days at the end of July. This was his first trip to Detroit since his appointment to the Trust. Jim Turner, Karen Nagher and the Board set up a whirlwind tour of the preservation and rehabilitation activities in Detroit including a reception at the Inn on Ferry Street and a meeting with the Detroit Summit (the coalition of preservation and other Detroit booster organizations.)

## Tour and Committee Updates

The **Downtown tours (both Saturday and the Tuesday Tours)** continue to be very popular. They had their best month ever in July – with well over 100 people attending one of the 8 tours that month. New downtown Compuware employees were astonished as they took the Skyscraper tour on July 22. The Albert Kahn Buildings tour had a large group on July 29. Downtown tour **Facilitator Ken Siver credits this to the improved PW publicity of the tours and the growing interest in Downtown Detroit.**

The **Eastern Market tour team** had their **third annual 4 am tour** at the end of July. Four intrepid souls met at the Market ‘bright and early’ to see the bustling market. They talked to a lettuce farmer from Imlay City who supplies 95% of the head lettuce that’s in V-8 juice, learned about the cold storage business ‘up close and personal’ (in a freezer!), got blueprints of the old Detroit City Brewery buildings, found out about the Egg House (bought fresh eggs for \$1/dozen), and finished up with breakfast at Farmers Restaurant and their usual (and unusual!) spin through the Berry and Sons Halal Slaughterhouse!!

The **Midtown tour team** continues to be active in their Cass/Woodward neighborhood. **(See one example in the VIP Spotlight later in this newsletter.)** Another upcoming event is the **PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION II on September 26**, sponsored by the Detroit Synergy Group – an organization of Detroit boosters and young urban citizens. **See the Volunteer Opportunities article** to see how you can be involved!!

The **New Center team** continues to combine Outreach activities with their tour to help to make new employees in their ‘big 3’ buildings aware of the great area they work in (Fisher, Cadillac Place (former GM building) and New Center Place). Several **NC volunteers (Gene Fitzgerald, Wallace Gregory, and Paul McDowell)** have been handing out PW brochures and have done ‘PW PR’ during lunch hour at New Center Place.

**Auto Heritage** has had a busy summer!! **June 14-16 marked the Ford Motor Company Centennial Celebration.** Events were planned throughout the city of Dearborn and Detroit to commemorate this occasion - including many activities at the Tplex (where the Model T was created). **Emily Smith reports -**

"The weekend kicked off Thursday evening, with a gathering of car clubs from around the country attending a catered dinner, tour and lecture at the original Model T factory. The building was open for tours the remainder of the weekend. Antique cars were brought in for display, memorabilia was available to purchase and the public responded with tremendous attendance. The fundraiser was hugely successful. Many Preservation Wayne tour Guides contributed assistance during these events - thanks goes out to everyone who helped. And as a reminder, there are more "**Tplex Clean-up Days**" scheduled this summer, on August 9th & Sept 13th. (**See the Volunteer Opportunities** for this 'hands-on preservation' event!!) Everyone is welcome to join in the efforts."

**But wait, there's more** – the Buick Centennial celebration is coming up, too!! More to follow!!

## Committee Updates

The **Outreach Committee** continues to promote PW tours at every opportunity – from speaking to 250 Cadillac retirees and spouses at their meeting in June to pitching the tours at the Tastefest and working with corporations relocating to the city.

Another exciting opportunity is to contact The Henry Ford and perhaps collaborate with them as they start up the Ford Centennial Rouge Plant tours this year. There is always a lot of interest from auto and history enthusiasts visiting The Henry Ford (as well as the tour guides there.)

If you know of groups, organizations, or opportunities that the Outreach Committee can help or contact, please **let Norb Keller know** (248-855-9346, leave a message if no answer.)

The **Publicity Committee (mainly members Bob Goldsmith and Bob Jocis)** has met every month since April to follow up on current and new media contacts. Our publicity 'blurbs' and mini-articles will soon be on the PW website, so you can pull them off if there are other organizations or such that you think we should contact. (If you do, please let Bob Goldsmith know, so we can maintain an ongoing list.)

## PW Website Plans

You may have noticed some changes in the PW website lately. **Susan Ebbert** (our new webmaster) has revamped the Calendar and Tours pages, although there is still work to do on the site. **Susan and Ellen Howell** (providing oversight) want to re-vamp the webpage to make it more 'user-friendly', include pictures, etc. They're just starting, so stay tuned. If you have ideas, please contact Ellen Howell at [ellen.howell@compuware.com](mailto:ellen.howell@compuware.com).

**Pictures are needed!!** They'd like to have a montage of tour pictures on the site (especially of people taking the tours.) If your tour team has any to contribute, please send a digital copy to Ellen.

(Editor's note – it is amazing how many times people tell us that they found out about the tours from the PW website. So it's **critical that we have a good presence out there.**)

## PW Seeks Tourism Award

Keep your fingers crossed and your four leaf clovers and rabbit's feet close by! Preservation Wayne has entered their more than 15 year program of guided walking tours in Detroit into the **2003 Smithsonian Magazine/Travelers Conservation Foundation (TCF) Sustainable Tourism Award for Preservation (STAP)**. PW volunteers **Sandy Novacek, Ellen Howell and Board member Karen Nagher compiled a comprehensive portfolio** of colorful photographs,

media clippings and narrative, and the grant request was submitted on July 11. The STAP is given annually to a person, company, or institution that supports preservation or restoration of historic or culturally significant entities. The recipient must demonstrate a connection between their endeavors and tourism.

**The Smithsonian and TCF narrow the entry field down to three** and then in October or November of 2003, the global public is invited to vote for the winner on the Internet. **Your help and help from everyone you know will be needed** to help PW win the grand prize of \$20,000!!!!!! We will keep you posted on how we place.

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities (you are always needed!!)

**August 16 – Theatre tour** – at this late date, we are mostly set, but if you are interested in helping, we're always glad to have another set of hands at this very busy event!! Contact Preservation Wayne at [preswayne@aol.com](mailto:preswayne@aol.com) or call (313) 577-3559 if interested.

**NOTE – as this is now being rescheduled, additional volunteers will be needed. Call PW.**

**September 12 – 14 – Festival of the Arts** (Festival info is at [www.detroitfestival.com](http://www.detroitfestival.com)) PW will be giving **tours of the Mansions of Ferry Avenue** on Sat/Sun from 11 – 5 and staffing a Booth during the 'daylight' hours on Fri/Sun)

**Volunteers needed are:**

- **Guides, Shepherds** (during tour hours – 11-5 Sat/Sun – 3 hour shifts)
- **Booth personnel** (during the hours of the Festival Friday – Sunday) (Meet and Greet, sell merchandise, promote the tours, etc.)
- **Set-up crew** (Saturday morning early)
- **Take-down crew** (Sunday early evening)

Email [PresWayne@aol.com](mailto:PresWayne@aol.com) or call 313-577-3559 if you can help (please put Festival of the Arts Volunteer in the title). This festival is one of the real great events in Detroit – you will see a huge variety of art, music, dance, sand sculptures, and much more!! To find out more about the Festival see <http://www.detroitfestival.com>

**September 13 - Tplex cleanup** (contact Emily Smith if you are interested or need more details [emilysmith\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:emilysmith_2000@yahoo.com) or at (313) 562-9134.)

**September 26 – Pedestrian Connection II** - walking tour Guides/Shepherds (contact Sandy Novacek if interested [novaceks@att.net](mailto:novaceks@att.net) or call PW at (313) 577-3559). **Info follows:**

Mark your calendars for Friday, September 26, 2003 from 4 p.m. – 10 p.m. for PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION II sponsored by the Detroit Synergy Group with cooperation from many organizations and businesses including Preservation Wayne.

Local residents, students, and visitors are invited to contribute to the emerging life on the street along Cass Avenue, at the heart of the Detroit Cultural District and PW's own Midtown Tour!!!! Stroll the stretch from Warren to Parsons to enjoy food and spirits from local restaurants and bars, live music, street performances, shopping, street art, speakers and HOPEFULLY live music on the Mackenzie House front porch and mini-walking tours of the neighborhood (Cass Avenue & West Canfield Historic District) led by Preservation Wayne VIPs. **If you can help doing 30-minute tours of the area on that day during the daylight hours (from about 4-6 or 7), PLEASE contact Sandy Novacek at [novaceks@att.net](mailto:novaceks@att.net) or PW at (313) 577-3559.** And if you or anyone you know can participate through "living history", in costume and character of the olden days, contact Sandy also.

**October 10 – Detroit Synergy Pub Crawl** - watch their website for details <http://www.detroit synergy.org/>

## VIP Spotlight – Jim Mellet from the Midtown Tour

Midtown guide **Jim Mellet** just joined us this year, and has been captivated by one of the sites on the tour – the Art Center Music School at Cass Avenue and Alexandrine. The school has a rich history, an admirable mission and a fascinating and sharp-witted, 91 year old director, Juanita Hammond. Jim has planted flowers and mowed the lawn at the school which is two joined buildings – one formerly the Art Deco, Egyptian Revival Style Wm. R. Hamilton Funeral Home and the other, the home (designed by A.C. Varney) of cigar manufacturer Robert H. Brown. The funeral home relocated to Birmingham after leaving Detroit and coincidentally is now almost across the street from Jim's home. He stopped by there recently and was delighted to meet a staff member who graciously dug through the home's files and located a booklet (with photographs) on the funeral home when it was at its Cass Avenue location in the 1930s! Jim has taken being a tour guide to the next level by becoming even more involved in the community. **Thanks, Jim!!!**

- Submitted by Sandy Novacek, Midtown Facilitator

## Plaudits – a great Letter to the Editor in the Livonia O&E newspaper!

The following Letter to the Editor was in the Livonia Observer & Eccentric newspaper on Thursday, August 7. This is a great letter! It says that our tours can totally change people's feelings about Detroit, and that PW deserves a thunderous standing ovation from the City. **Thanks to John Cole and Bob Goldsmith for passing this along.**

### Opinion-changing tour

Preservation Wayne deserves a standing ovation from the city of Detroit. And not just polite ho-hum clapping, but the thunderous bottom-of-the-9th-bases-loaded-home-run-seam-bursting-blast-out-of-the-field-thunderous-applause.

They have hit one home run after another with their wonderful tours, and contagious pride of Detroit. I am visiting here from Miami and was coerced into taking the "Downtown Skyscrapers" tour by my sister Mary, an employee at Compuware. Mary's coworker Ellen is a volunteer for Preservation Wayne, and she encouraged Mary and I to go on one of the tours. Last Tuesday's after work walking tour was "Downtown Skyscrapers."

As a former Livonia resident, I was toting the "bad baggage" feelings I have had about Detroit since the mid '60s. Little did I know that I was only three hours from totally changing my opinion about the city due to seeing the city through Preservation Wayne "prideful goggles." The tour was just fascinating, and I thank Preservation Wayne for totally changing my feelings about the city. I enjoyed that tour so much that I took another of their tours on Saturday, touring "New Center," and last evening's Tuesday tour "Buildings of Albert Kahn." Both were fabulous.

For any suburbanite who has not been into the city for a while, get off your hind quarters and try one of these tours. It feels good to finally be proud of being from Detroit again. Really good. Thank you Preservation Wayne, you've won over another Detroit Fan.

Pat Whitman

Miami, Fla.

(Editor's note – **congratulations to Bob, Ellen and your Guides and Shepherds for a great job!! It's fun to see others learn what we already know!!**)

## Notes from the Editor

Thanks you for the abundance of information and write-ups from the Facilitators, Committee chairs, and VIPs who contributed to this newsletter (John Cole, Bob Goldsmith, Ellen Howell, Norb Keller, Sandy Novacek, Ken Siver, and Emily Smith).

We are currently working on our volunteers distribution list. We have discovered that many of our VIPs are not on our current email distribution list and I have not sent this out to 'mail only' members. I hope to fix that with this newsletter – it will go out to the updated list and will be posted on the PW website as soon as I get it to Susan.

Happy touring!!