

Miniature houses make a large impact

By Rachel Hoffmeyer



Miniature version of the race car driven by the winner of the first Indianapolis 500. The little race car is on display at the Museum of Miniature Houses in Carmel. By Lucas Lloyd, TheStatehouseFile.com

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CARMEL, Ind. – Little bitty pieces of art are showing a bigger picture of the Hoosier state for the bicentennial.

Indianapolis resident, Heidi Knoerzer, said the exhibits at the Museum of Miniature Houses in Carmel gave her a fresh perspective.

“People complain about so many things,” Knoerzer said. “But if you look back at some of the hardships and different things that people had to go through we’re really actually quite lucky.”

Countless hours go into the creative structure to each tiny home and attention is given to even the tiniest details, including precise measurements. Shingles are designed uniquely and even the grain in the hardwood flooring isn’t overlooked.

Not only are individual homes on display, but the museum also features a small town market, an intricate steamboat and a miniature version of the race car driven by the winner of the first Indianapolis 500.

The museum covers important historical events from 1816 to the 1930s.

One of the exhibits is a scaled down replica of the Levi Coffin house, which was built in 1839. The Coffins were well known for their role in helping slaves escape to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Thousands of slaves passed through the Coffin’s western Indiana home.

Elaine Mancini, executive director of the Museum of Miniature Houses, said she wanted to cover as much of the unique history of Indiana as possible.

“I think the bicentennial is a tool to prove to Hoosiers that they have a lot to be proud of,” Mancini said. “They have



done remarkable things that are important to the whole nation and to the whole world.”

Mancini and her coworkers have been working on the exhibit since spring 2015 and are already looking towards the future.

After the first bicentennial exhibit, which runs through Memorial Day, Mancini is excited about putting together another feature.

“The second bicentennial exhibit will be opening in June that focuses on only professional miniature artisans,” Mancini said.

The museum is the only one of its kind in the state and is just one of five in the country.

Suzanne Landshof, cofounder and treasurer of the museum, said the museum is a great attraction for visitors.

“Because the Carmel arts district is now really pulling tourists from out of the state and out of the county we do get a lot of tourists,” Landshof said. “And is nice because they are looking for things to do and this is rather unique.”

Mancini said it is her mission “to share the fine art of scale miniature with everybody.”

The museum is located in Carmel at the corner of 1st Ave. and Main St. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children younger than 10.

Lucas Lloyd is a reporter for TheStatehouseFile.com, a news website powered by Franklin College journalism students.



Elaine Mancini, executive director of the Museum of Miniature Houses, stands by a bicentennial exhibit. By Lucas Lloyd, TheStatehouseFile.com



A miniature version of one of the first paddle boats that was powered by steam. Considered a revolutionary invention for the commerce of Hoosiers on the Ohio River, it's featured in the exhibit at the Museum of Miniature Houses. By Lucas Lloyd, TheStatehouseFile.com