

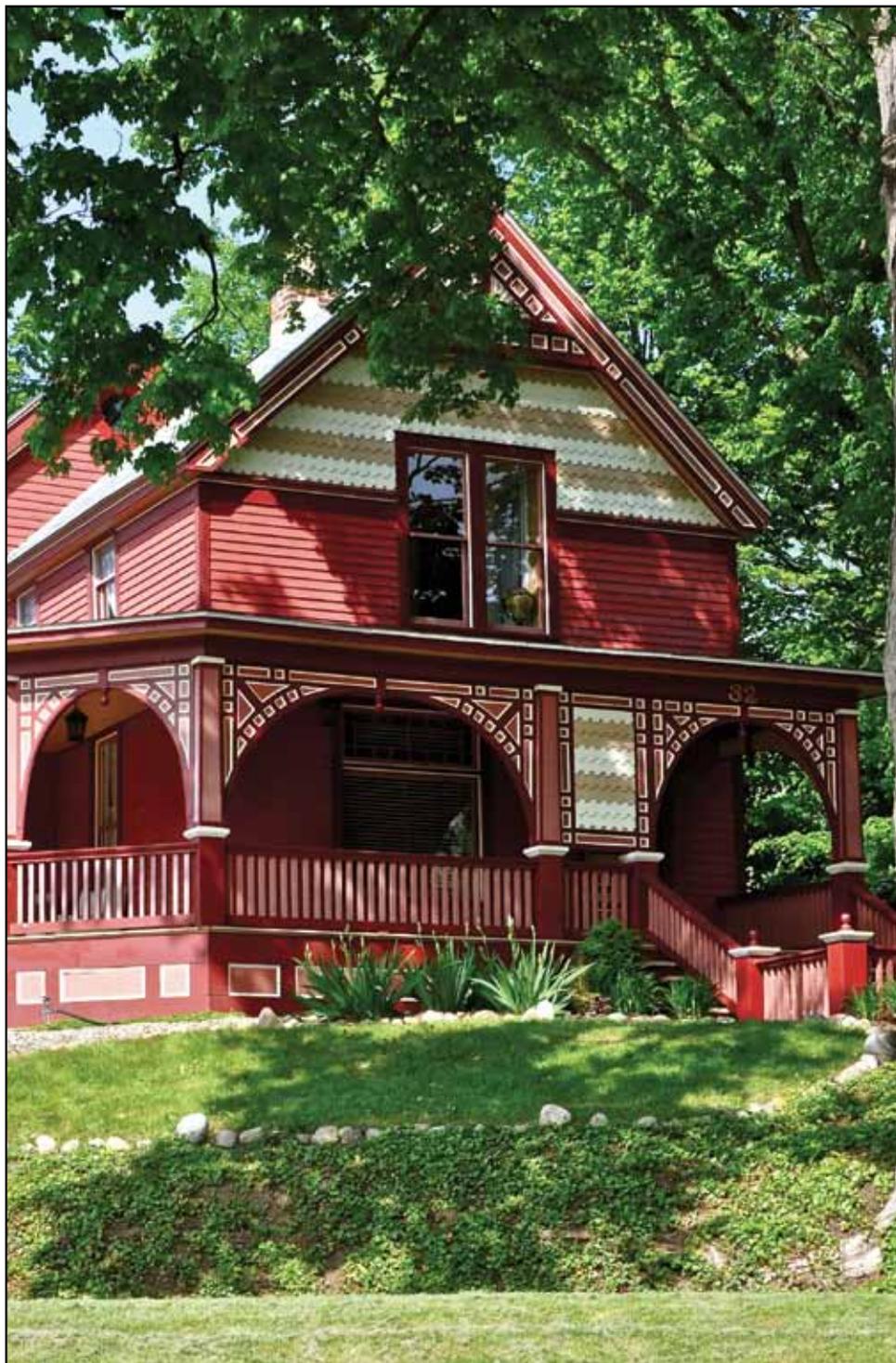
Heritage NEWS



AUG./SEPT. 2011

Good News Edition

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation **2011 GOOD NEWS ISSUE** reporting, for our own delight and that of our Festival visitors, on some of the improvements that have occurred in the Ypsilanti Historic District over the past year. It's also our chance to say thank you to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti!



34th Annual Historic Home Tour

Since 1977, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has been pleased and proud to present one of the community's most important resources, its wealth of historic architecture. This year's homeowners have graciously agreed to open their doors so that we all may see and appreciate the results of historic preservation efforts in the Ypsilanti area. We take this opportunity to thank them. We hope you can enjoy the tour!

Advance tickets are on sale in Ypsilanti at Haab's Restaurant, Norton-Durant Florists & Gifts, Salt City Antiques, Nelson Amos Gallery, and Materials Unlimited and Downtown Home & Garden in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and \$12.00 the day of the tour. On the day of the tour, tickets are available at the Home Tour ticket booth in front of the Historical Museum at 220 North Huron Street from 10 a.m. until 3 pm and Haab's on Michigan Avenue.

The 34th Annual Historic Home Tour will take place
Sunday, August 21 noon – 5pm

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation presents its 2011 GOOD NEWS ISSUE for our own delight and that of our Festival visitors, who enjoy seeing "what has happened" since they were here last year! It's also our chance to say Thank You to everyone who cares about and for Ypsilanti!

Historic Structure Markers Awarded this Year

For many years, the Heritage Foundation has annually awarded Historic Structure markers to owners of significant houses and commercial buildings. The number of those markers in the community is now well over 100.

In 1990, the Foundation issued its 15th annual engagement calendar, which featured 12 village barns and carriage houses. The cover of that calendar stated: "In the back yards and lanes of Ypsilanti is still to be found a fascinating collection of village barns and carriage houses. They contribute to the historic character of Ypsilanti in a way no other buildings can. Now is the time to appreciate and preserve those remaining."

The Heritage Foundation wishes to bring attention to these significant structures, to further the community's appreciation of the contribution they make to our architectural history, and to encourage their preservation.

And so, by awarding Historic Structure markers, we recognize those historical and architectural treasures still found in out-of-the-way places where, if you listen carefully, you might still hear the sound of horses' hooves and the rumble of wagon wheels.

"Carriage houses and wagon sheds were once as commonly encountered in the country and villages as garages are today. Even in the city, there had to be a place to store the buggy or delivery wagon. Such buildings were commonly set apart from the house and were roomy enough to provide stabling for horses and storage for harnesses and feed. The buildings varied greatly in execution, from the humble open wagon shed to elegant quarters for stylish carriages intended only for the transport of people. Most rural and village buildings were of simple wood-frame construction and greatly resembled cow barns, although built on a smaller scale. Ample provision was usually made for turn-around space, and running water was often piped in so that vehicles could be washed down after heavy use. The everyday farmer or mechanic wanted only a utilitarian space and often used it for storing grain or equipment as well. Gentlemen farmers and more affluent city dwellers frequently built brick, stone, or fanciful wood carriage houses of considerable distinction." Lawrence Grow, 'Country Architecture'



Heritage Foundation

HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKERS
were awarded this year to the houses at:

601 West Forest
Queen Anne, c. 1885
owned by Eastern Michigan University

310 North Hamilton
c. 1894
owned by Barbara Hale

305 South Washington
c. 1926
owned by Beverly Buck

and to the
village barn at:

417 North Adams
owned by Stewart Beal

Congratulations!

Historic Preservation
recycling on a grand scale!

Good News in Ypsilanti

Heritage News • Good News Edition - August • September 2011

Before and after photos

of Barry LaRue and Kim Clarke's project at 505 N. Hamilton



This is what historic preservation is all about - Barry and Kim's masterful restoration and reconstruction has banished the ugly ducking and reinstated the swan!



314 N. PARK - this long abused and neglected house has been attractively rehabbed and now contributes positively to a grateful neighborhood.

The statue of **DEMETRIUS YPSILANTI** at the Water Tower has had some loving attention. Don Randazzo reports on what happened to Demetrius last year.

The joints between the marble sections at the base of the pedestal had deteriorated and mortar was missing. Silicone had been put into the joints and smeared onto the surface of the marble next to the joint and had become badly discolored.

It wasn't possible to use a solvent of any kind to remove the silicone because the silicone had cured. Trying to dissolve it would most likely have permanently stained the marble.

After removing the bulk of the silicone from the grout joints, Don discovered that the residue that remained would yield when it was rubbed with ordinary erasers which presented no risk of abrasion to the marble. (Thanks to Anne Stevenson for her help in cleaning and preparation.)



The joints were then tuck-pointed using a mixture of white silica sand, white Portland cement, and white lime. Instead of water in that mix, the liquid Don used was an acrylic mortar admix which increased bond strength and improved performance.

And so Demetrius Ypsilanti, for whom our town was named, again stands proudly, well cleaned and repaired.

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2011 Historic Home Tour



314 Hiawatha Street

Brent Welsh & Adam Levensgood

A 1950's split-level ranch house is typically not what one expects to encounter on a historic home tour. But for Brent Welsh and Adam Levensgood it was exactly the type of "historic" rehab project they were looking for. After renovating a vernacular upright and wing house on North Hamilton in Ypsilanti, the two were eager for a change, and they decided to pursue a preservation project on a mid-century house. Their aim in putting their house on today's tour is to spotlight a house from that era.

The 1958 house at 314 Hiawatha was built alongside a near identical house, a common and economical building trend of the post-war era that continues today. Raymond and Mary Whiting spent nearly fifty years in the home, raising their two children, Gerri and Mary Ann there. In 2006 the house was sold by the widowed Mary. It suffered through a string of owners, and when Welsh and Levensgood purchased it in 2009 it was a poster house for neglect and deferred maintenance. They have spent the past two years rehabilitating the house from top to bottom, doing most of the work themselves. They've achieved their goal of preserving as much of the original design as possible.

The entire house is open today, including the open-concept main level, with a modern new kitchen; the extensively renovated lower level, with new bath, guest room, and den; and the upper level, with three restored bedrooms and a bathroom with original tile. The house is decorated with a mix of contemporary, mid-century, and Danish modern furnishings, which complement the simple modern style of the house. The extensive gardens that surround the house were all planted within the past two years. The backyard plantings take their inspiration from the estate gardens at the Casa Loma castle in Toronto.



7 North Normal Street

Roberta & Ian Andrews

This stately home, built in 1848, has long been a landmark for Ypsilanti residents and may have been designed by the architect who designed the 1840's Greek Revival house at 218 North Washington Street that has been owned by the Ladies' Literary Club since 1913.

The architecture of the Normal Street house, with its double verandas of fretted columns, is reminiscent of the Greek Revival style of the antebellum South. The facade has a beautifully balanced design of French doors above and below; the Italianate details were later additions. The house probably started as a rectangle, but successive alterations have changed the roof line. Tourgoers will notice as they proceed through the house that many additions helped to enlarge the informal living space.

William Cross, a wheat farmer and businessman from Genesee, New York, had the house built. By 1862 it was sold to Frank Smith, and it was his family that sold the residence in 1914 to its most well-known resident, P. Roger Cleary, founder of Cleary College. Mr. Cleary's pride in his penmanship, learned as a child in Ireland, led him to establish the college with a business curriculum.

The Cleary family prospered and was pleased to move in to a home that accommodated their four children so easily. But, as so often happens, the children grew up and left home. The death of Mrs. Cleary in 1939 coincided with the need for housing for the multitudes of new workers at the bomber factory during the war. Mr. Cleary divided his home into four apartments: one for himself, one for his son Owen's family, and the other two for renters. It remained a house of apartments until 1977, when it was bought by Luann and Howard Booth, who began a restoration.

The present owners, Roberta and Ian Andrews, purchased the house in 2001 and have completed its return to a single family home of great charm and freshness. There is plenty of room for two sons and some very large dogs. The entire house will be open for tourgoers to see.

34th Annual
Historic Home Tour
Sunday, August 21st from noon-5pm Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and \$12.00 the day of the tour.

2011 Historic Home Tour



32 South Normal Street

Adam Delaney

People who regularly drive down West Michigan Avenue have enjoyed watching the transformation of this circa 1893 Queen Anne house into a painted lady that sits high above the intersection of South Normal and Ypsilanti's main drag. Adam Delaney, the owner of two concrete construction companies, purchased it in 2004 because "it needed to be fixed up." Slowly but surely he has turned the house into a beautiful showpiece. His mom, Neeta Delaney, has great taste, and the two of them sparred over the exterior colors. The house features three shades of red, and Mom won on one of those. Delaney says he knew he wanted a tan shade and a sunny yellow to complement the reds.

The house's most significant owners were the Plomaritas family. Delaney says that Cleopatra Plomaritas died there in the 1980s. In 2004 the house had two apartments, and Delaney has kept that configuration. He lives on the second floor and his renter, classical violinist Henrik Karapetyan, occupies the first floor. Delaney shares his apartment with his adorable three-year-old daughter, Maya, who is there several days every week. Both apartments will be on today's tour.

Delaney's renovation reflects his excellent carpentry, masonry, landscaping, and artistic skills. The back entrance to the house is all new, and he built it to mimic the front of the house. He also created a loft bedroom that is accessed from his kitchen. He painstakingly built a stone wall up a slope to the right of the house's front entrance and did extensive re-landscaping. Delaney's artistic skills and the taste he probably inherited from his mother are apparent throughout his apartment. For example, he changed a bedroom at the front to a music room, and on one of the walls he painted a mural that was inspired by a drawing of an art deco pendant he saw in a book. Delaney is learning the guitar, and his three guitars are displayed on the wall. Maya has her own rack on the floor for her "guitar."

A fun side note: when Delaney was renovating the house he found six crisp one hundred dollar bills under a vinyl floor in his apartment.



35 South Summit Street

Eric & Karen Maurer

This picturesque farmhouse, urban in style and form, is one of the finest examples of Italianate architecture in Superior Township. It stands as evidence of Michigan's proud and prosperous nineteenth-century rural past.

Milton and Kittie Geer hired Ypsilanti contractor Herschel Goodspeed to build the house in 1884. The young couple had married the year before, settling on 146 acres purchased from Milton's father. (The son of Watson Geer and Mary Jane Pray, Milton grew up in the Pray house on Ann Arbor Road, also featured on this year's tour.) The Geers had three children. The signatures of their two youngest, Roy and Hazel, can still be seen upstairs on the plaster walls of a bedroom.

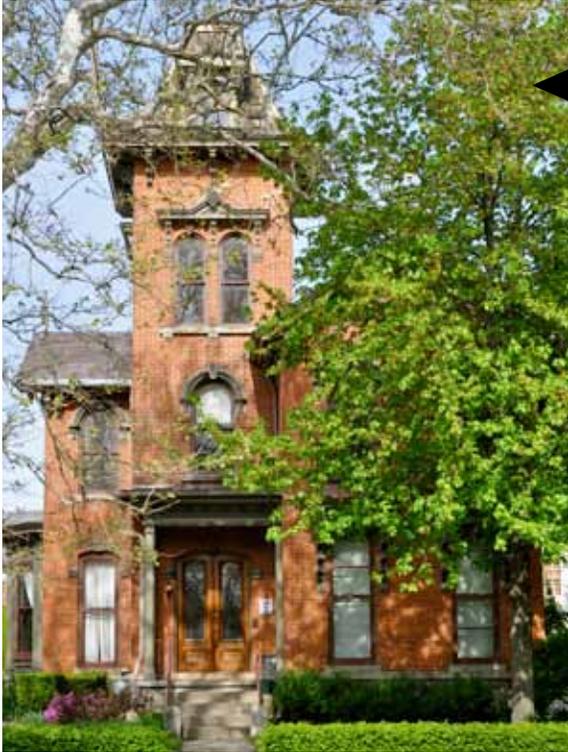
The Geers operated their farm for about twenty years, raising livestock and growing crops. They left farming for the city about 1903, moving to a house on Congress Street in Ypsilanti. Milton served as secretary of his brother-in-law's business, Ypsilanti's Michigan Ladder Company. The Geers rented their farm to tenants until 1923, when they sold it to George and Mary Barnes. The Barnes family operated it as a dairy farm until the mid-1970s. The family changed the house very little in nearly eighty years of occupancy by two generations.

When Glenn and Jeanine Miller purchased the home from the Barnes estate in May 2000, they began an extensive restoration of this long-neglected gem. The house's second floor never had electricity or central heating. A bathroom had been awkwardly added in the best parlor in 1950. Yet the home retained many of its fine original features, including the walnut, butternut, and oak woodwork.

Over the past ten years, the Millers have carefully restored the house, doing most of the work themselves. They have enjoyed researching the home, gleaning information about its past inhabitants from census records, newspapers, and city directories. This research led them to descendants of the Geers, one of whom will share photographs and history of the Geer family during today's tour.

Advance tickets are on sale in Ypsilanti at Haab's Restaurant, Norton-Durant Florists & Gifts, Salt City Antiques, Nelson Amos Gallery and Materials Unlimited. They are also available in Ann Arbor at Downtown Home & Garden. On the day of the tour, tickets are available at the Home Tour ticket booth in front of the Historical Museum at 220 North Huron Street from 10 a.m. until 3 pm and Haab's on Michigan Ave.

2011 Historic Home Tour



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121 North Huron Street

Doug & Mary Kisor

This spectacular example of a house in the Italian Villa style was built in the early 1870s. It became the home of Dr. John Andrus Watling, the first college-educated dentist to practice in Michigan and one of the founders of the University of Michigan School of Dentistry. The house features a tall tower, an ornamental bay window on the side, and a front gable with hipped hoods over the street-side windows on the first floor. (Dr. Watling's dental office was next door at 119 North Huron.)

In the mid-1980s, Oscar Haab rented to Mary and Doug Kisor one of the four apartments then in the house. A memory from that period is of the gravel parking lot that stretched from the back of the house to Pearl Street. It is hard to picture that parking lot today because gardens and trees now fill the space. In the mid-1990s the Kisors purchased the house. Since then, restoration has fluctuated between the inside and the outside, depending on the greatest need and available resources. The interior features wonderful wood floors, including a rich and special parquet floor of walnut, oak, and cherry in the dining room. A circular stair provides access to the second floor (the two levels in the tower can only be reached by ladder). In the early 2000s, the Kisors began to transition the house back to a single-family home. Significant progress has been made, although renovations continue in the formal rooms downstairs and in the tower entry space.

Two side notes, one informative and the other fun. First, the house was previously thought to have been built in 1865. But Doug Kisor has found several bricks with a patent date of December 13, 1870, which indicates that the earliest date for the house would be 1871. Second, Dr. Watling's wife donated an impressive pier mirror from her home to the nearby Ladies' Literary Club, where she was a member. It still graces the club's main meeting room.



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505 North Hamilton Street

Barry La Rue & Kim Clarke

Owner Barry LaRue suspects, based on its exterior design, that this Queen Anne house was built between 1885 and 1889. The Alton E. Lewis family lived in the house for many years. The family probably bought it in 1901, when the Lewis brothers started the Michigan Ladder Company, which is still in business in Ypsilanti today. Alton Lewis put an addition on the front northeast corner of the house to expand the front hallway and add a staircase. The garage to shelter the new-fangled "automobile" was constructed around 1915.

Alton died in 1936. After the death of his widow, two unmarried Lewis sisters, Sara and Caroline (Carrie) lived in the house. Carrie outlived her sister, dying in 1967. The house became a student rental until a Mr. Mulder bought it in 1983. He died broke and, although his house was paid for, he was behind on his taxes. Barry and Kim bought the house from the county in October 2009.

Today the house has a new roof and front porch, a rebuilt chimney, and new plumbing, wiring, and attic insulation. A highlight of the renovation was the removal of the ghastly cement tile the Lewis sisters had installed in 1955, obliterating at the time all vestiges of the house's former charm and style. Much work has been done on the inside, which today consists of two very nice apartments. The one on the ground floor is occupied by Scotty James, who works at Materials Unlimited, and the one on the second floor by Bee Mayhew; her husband, Jim Roll; and her daughter, Samantha. Bee owns the popular Beezy's restaurant on North Washington Street.

Many current features of the house, including doors, trim, light fixtures, and other details were either salvaged from the home itself or from other homes in Ypsilanti. Barry LaRue is often seen around town on trash day placing an old door or window frame into his truck to be reused at a later time and place.

*Thank You to our
Sponsors, Home Owners & Volunteers
who make the Annual
Historic Home Tour a success each year*

Good News (continued from page 3)

CROSS STREET is where the action is this summer. Work is underway as part of a non-motorized transportation enhancement grant received this year by the City and the DDA.

East Cross between Rice and Huron:

Replacement of concrete planters with bump-outs designed as rain gardens for storm water filtration, crossing improvements in the form of ADA compliant sidewalk ramps and clearly delineated crosswalks at all intersections, addition of a pedestrian seat wall in front of the Signal Tower extending west to the driveway access into the parking lot and additional pedestrian crossing on River Street near the entrance to the Ypsilanti Food Coop.

West Cross between Normal and Washington Streets:

Addition of more than 70 street trees, traffic calming and crossing improvements in the form of bump-outs at intersections, ADA compliant sidewalk ramps, and clearly delineated crosswalks at all intersections with pedestrian scale LED street lighting.

With the closing of **CAMPUS DRUGS**, Ypsilanti takes another step into its future as this long-forgotten block is renovated to provide contemporary student housing and neighborhood retail. Andrew O'Neal, Ann Arbor contractor and developer, is to be credited with the vision. The upper floor will be transformed into spacious, loft-style three and four bedroom apartments targeted for students. The ground floor will be anchored by a coffee shop with an outdoor patio with a view of Ypsilanti's famous water tower. The design is by Quinn Evans Architects under the direction of Ypsilanti's Lis Knibbe.



The ever popular **TOWER INN** has had a spectacular face lift! Check it out!!

At the **HISTORIC MUSEUM**, handsome new storm windows, custom-made by Ron Rupert, now protect the original windows.

In Depot Town, The **FOOD CO-OP** on North River has expanded to the entire first floor as well as part of the second floor. It has a new paint job and a handsome retaining wall with plantings surrounding a new patio.



Thanks to YCUA for the extraordinary care taken of the **WATER TOWER**, now 121 years old and still Ypsilanti's chief source of water



Thanks to **STEVE PIERCE** for his donation of Heritage Foundation web site hosting charges and domain registration fees.

GREEN & GROWING To everyone who has tucked petunias, marigolds, impatiens and zinnias into alleys, window boxes, hanging baskets and wonderful little nooks and crannies all over town – *Thank You!*



Profits from this year's Historic Home Tour will contribute to the repair and refurbishing of two of the State Historical Markers - one featuring Prospect Park (in the park at the corner of Prospect and Cross) and one featuring Michigan's Interurbans (in front of New Horizons School at the corner of Michigan and Park).

Thanks to everyone who works to make Ypsilanti a better place to live:

Police, fire fighters, city manager, city department heads, city employees, mayor & city council, boards & commissions! They're a great bunch doing a great job in hard times.

Thanks also to the Department of Public Works for great service year-round, for SUPER snow removal and for never missing their scheduled rounds, even during the chaos left by storms.

And, as always, **SPECIAL THANKS** to all those folks who quietly and faithfully maintain their properties, who sweep and water, pick up and plant, repair and paint. If we missed mentioning you, know that without your effort Ypsilanti wouldn't be the great place it is!

There are still onions among the orchids - nobody knows that better than we do. But, next year, again, there will be fewer onions and more orchids!

Come back and see us then! We love having you here and your annual visit is a wonderful incentive for us to "get ready for company"!

See you next year!



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

209 North Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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See you at the next General Meeting Wednesday, September 21, 2011

Heritage News is the newsletter of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. It is distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail.

Watch for our new website - It's under construction and coming Soon!

Our Museums — Don't miss these treasures!



Michigan Firehouse Museum

110 W. Cross Street
between Huron and Washington streets
www.michiganfirehousemuseum.org



Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

100 E. Cross at North River
ypsiautoheritage.org



Ypsilanti Historical Museum

220 N. Huron
between Washtenaw & Cross streets
www.ypsilantihistoricalsociety.org



Yankee Air Museum

Willow Run Airport
www.yankeeairmuseum.org

Yes! I would like to support preservation and become a member of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.

Please check the appropriate box and return with your check to:

Claudia Pettit, YHF Membership Chair
945 Sheridan | Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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| <input type="radio"/> Students & Seniors \$5 | <input type="radio"/> Individual \$10 |
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