

Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

January 1992

Ypsilanti, Mi

MEETING: Wednesday, January 29, 1992, 7:30

LOCATION: The First Methodist Church
The Meeting Room (downstairs)
209 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti

PROGRAM: THE INTERURBAN RAILWAYS OF YPSILANTI
AND THE QUIRK DYNASTY

SPEAKER: William H. Henning, Professor of
Speech and Broadcasting,
Macomb Community College, as well as
Co-author of six books and various
articles on local transportation

DEAR MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS:

As your editor, I've just got off the phone after talking with "Bill" Henning about his upcoming talk to the Foundation. His brief discussion of his subject was so exciting, so new to me, that I want to call everybody and urge them to attend this meeting. If one of the purposes of our organization is to put us in touch with more Ypsilanti history, this man will do it. He is co-author of several books on the subject of interurban lines in Michigan, including the three volume WHEN EASTERN MICHIGAN RODE THE RAILS, and will focus his zoom lens, slide presentation on the interurban railway of Ypsilanti and how this was a center of that effort to offer alternatives to the Michigan Central Railway Lines. He has fascinating stories about Daniel P. Quirk and his machinations to break the railway monopoly. If, in late January we're in the midst of a "big" local political struggle for power before the February primary, come and put that all into perspective with some of the real scuttle-butt of by-gone days here in Old Ypsilanti. **HE WILL HOLD HIS PRESENTATION TO ONE HOUR ONLY.** However, we may just be able, **WHILE WE ENJOY OUR REFRESHMENTS**, to view a ten (or less) minute video of an actual live interurban running between Grass Lake and Chelsea in 1929. (J.H.)

AS ALWAYS, EVERYBODY WELCOME!

TOWNER HOUSE DEMOLISHED?

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAS APPLIED FOR A PERMIT TO DEMOLISH THE TOWNER HOUSE (ACROSS THE STREET FROM OLD TOWN HALL). THERE WILL BE A PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 1992 AT 7:00 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL.

CALL FOR GARDEN NOTES:

For the next issue of the Heritage News the Foundation would like to publish notes from our readers: special plans for your garden in 1992, suggestions that relate in any way to gardening, particularly gardening that beautifies Ypsilanti; soil suggestions; ideas about house plants, window boxes, planters, etc.; notes about catalogues, plants, composting; your dreams for your own garden (or for Ypsilanti at large), as to gardens, in 1992; notes about sharing and exchange of seeds, tubers, bulbs, etc. (If you want to share or trade, you may need to give your phone number.) Please participate and make this a lively issue of the News which focuses on Garden Notes: only you can do it. If you wish to remain absolutely anonymous, say so. We will edit as necessary. Send your notes, clearly hand written or typed, to The Editor, Heritage News, 510 Pearl Street, Ypsilanti, 48197.

Membership in the Foundation: Single: \$10 per year; Family: \$15; Senior and Student: \$3. Send dues to Lisa Walters, Treasurer, 102 N. Wallace, Ypsilanti, 48197.

**The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation
Heritage News
510 Pearl Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197**

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MARCH 1992

Ypsilanti, MI

- MEETING:** March 24, 1992 - 7:30 p.m.
- LOCATION:** The First Methodist Church
The Meeting Room (downstairs)
(Main Entry Door on Washtenaw)
209 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti
(Corner of Washtenaw and Washington
in Ypsilanti)
- PROGRAM:** The Restoration of the Geer School
- SPEAKER:** Kate Otto, Chairperson
Restoration Committee

DID YOU KNOW that the State of Michigan now mandates that Michigan History be taught at the Fourth Grade level? That's one strong argument made by Kate Otto for the restoration of the Geer School, that charming brick edifice (even before restoration) at the corner of Plymouth Road and Gotfredson. Sometime within the 3 week unit every fourth grader will spend studying Michigan history, as a part of the Social Studies Curriculum, he or she will spend from one to five days at the one room Geer School, built in 1880 and now restored. Kate tells me that she will have no more than a dozen slides and one photograph from about 1890 to show us, but she will be able to help us understand what's involved in the successful completion of a project of this kind. Incidentally, if you have one room school pictures or related material, you are urged to bring them (at your own risk, of course) to share with the group. Maybe we'll have time for those of us who attended one room schools to reminisce.

WE WANT TO ADD that we especially invite all those who have worked on and/or contributed to the E.M.U. One Room School Project to come - and bring a friend.

Refreshment will be served. See you there!

PRACTICAL POINTERS for PARSIMONIOUS PETUNIA PLANTERS

(The following 'petunia piece' (including the title) was written by Cheryl Farmer, whose banks of petunias have astonished anyone with any aesthetics whatsoever as they drive up North Huron Street on a summer's day.)

Soil (quality) and water (quantity) are the essentials for petunia splendor. Is your soil like mine, almost pure sand? If so, water is the limiting factor for growth. Possible solutions: (1) Make friends with a tree! Or better yet, (2) with someone who has trees and likes to rake! Dump bags of leaves on your chosen flower bed to a level of 2-3' in the fall. Turn them under to compost through the winter. This adds moisture-holding organics to your soil. (3) Make friends with a cat! Or with someone who has a cat! Dump boxes of used kitty litter (minus solids please, for aesthetics!) on your chosen flower bed through the winter. Turn it under (with another layer of leaves, if you have them) in the spring. This adds moisture-holding clay to your soil. Alternatively, (4) plant each new petunia plant with 1/2 cup fresh kitty litter thrown into the hole. Watch your watering bill go down--and your plants thrive.

Stock stock be pruned. Pinch each branch of each new petunia plant back to the last big leaf. This allows the plant to grow a strong root system before it has to produce blooms. Pinching delays bloom by about two weeks. But each plant will branch at each pinch point, ultimately growing to an enormous size. This means you can space plants about 10" apart and still produce the effect of a floral blanket. Wider spacing means fewer flats: hence, cheaper to buy, and less work to plant! Make colorful bouquets from the pinched branches to take some of the sadness out of this process.

Schedule your weeding early in the day. The relative coolness of morning makes the job easier, and the fragrance is strongest then--a scent no Chanel perfume can match! Heaven probably smells like a petunia patch on a summer morning. Pick bouquets frequently through the summer to adorn the house, stimulate more branching growth, and prevent spindliness. Enjoy! (C.F.)

A NOTE FROM JOAN KNOERTZER:

Whatever you plant, don't give up. It many work out next year--or the next. My friend gave me "Moon Flower" seeds. I planted them. No luck. Next year--more seeds. No luck. But the third year, these enormous bushes (vines?) grew with hundreds of 7-inch trumpet blooms that appeared in late afternoon and evenings. From then on I've never lacked for these beautiful blooms. (J.K.)

(Note: Joan is a member of a small but growing Garden Club that includes members from Ypsilanti--Ann Arbor and the area. They meet in private houses, create their own programs, share books, etc. Maureen McCormick would be happy to answer your questions about the group: 484-0592. (Maureen, by the ways, recommends reading--whatever you can that will give you ideas.)



MCRR depot gardens at Ypsilanti panned by expert

Most local preservationists are very much aware of the esteem with which early Ypsilantians held those ornate gardens at the depot. A popular picture of the time shows a floral display of a steam passenger train going over a trestle at Niagara Falls -- with floral smoke coming from the stack of the steam engine, yet! Proud as we locals must have been of our famed gardens at the depot, America's leading landscape architects took a dim view of the garish and unnatural display. In their 1913 proposal to the City of Ypsilanti, the Olmsted brothers, of Brookline, Mass., recommended several changes for the City's railroad district. Some of their other projects included New York's Central Park, Ashville's Biltmore Gardens, and Detroit's Belle Isle. Here's what they had to say about Ypsilanti's . . . Railway Station and Yards [recommendation #38]:

"The somewhat remarkable efforts of the Michigan Central to make the station grounds attractive should encourage the City to cooperate with and supplement these efforts, not only by preserving and improving the outlook over the river but by securing more radical and essential improvements in connection with the station itself. In the first place, the present grade crossings of the tracks at Cross Street and in a less degree at Forest Avenue are serious evils for the elimination of which the City and the railroad should adopt definite plans at once in order that no further obstacles may be placed in the way of improvement, even though such plans cannot be carried out for many years. If the station were to be moved to the westerly side of the tracks whence most of the business comes, the evil of the Cross Street grade crossing could be materially reduced, as a large share of the travel across the tracks would be eliminated.

"Sooner or later the City will require greater facilities for handling freight than can be provided in the present freight house and adjacent sidings. The arrangements for loading and unloading live stock ought to be shifted, as a matter of railroad convenience, to the opposite side of the tracks, and placed in a somewhat less conspicuous position. These facts point to the advisability of shifting the whole freight business to the south of Cross Street where the railroad already has some land, and where a sidetrack now branches off to the Water Works, and where several factories are already established. Such a change in connection with shifting the passenger station to the westerly side of the tracks and parking the river valley would give the entrance to Ypsilanti a breadth and liberality of treatment far more attractive than is possible under present conditions. In the present situation much has been attempted and it is perhaps a fair criticism to say that in the effort to make the best of a limited space the railroad has already gone to the extreme in the way of gardenesque elaboration, and that a simpler, less labored and more easily maintained treatment of the grounds would be more appropriate and more beautiful."

Seventy-nine years later the Olmsted brothers might be surprised to find no trains stopping at a much reduced depot which was never moved across the tracks, vegetables and jazz being offered in the misplaced freighthouse, and the gaudy flower gardens moved streetside and tended by the local inhabitants of the former railroad tenements. What they saw as unsightly 'sidetrack' is now commemorated in the name of a popular saloon in that City.

A full copy of the 93-page Olmsted Brothers' proposal -- complete with clear black and white photos of City flora in 1913 -- is on file at The Old Caboose in Depot Town. The editor will share it upon request.
- Tom Dodd, *The Depot Town Rag*

The above notes from Tom Dodd included two photographs of John Laidlaw, who was largely responsible for the fame of the gardens at the old railway station. We reproduce them here, with thanks to Tom, editor of the Depot Town Rag.



Of this historically notable Ypsilanti gardener, Harvey Colman, in his The Story of Ypsilanti, 1923, wrote: "John Laidlaw, an expert Scottish trained landscape gardener. His unique floral constructions, the Liberty Bell, flanked by cannon and crossed muskets, containing 17,000 plants, the log cabin containing 32,000 plants, the Battleship Maine and the cantilever bridge at Niagara Falls with a locomotive just starting across and the falls beneath, attracted the attention of passing travellers and carried the fame of Ypsilanti the country over. Pictures of some of these floral creations appeared in Harper's Weekly."



VOLUNTEER NEEDED FOR HOME TOUR SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR

Plans for the 1992 Historic Home Tour are well underway. However, we are in need of a volunteer to serve as a chair of the subcommittee responsible for organizing the post-tour party. The chair of the party committee is responsible for finding the other committee members and together this group plans and executes the party. This committee is not responsible for finding the party location, as the general home tour committee takes care of that.

If you've ever thought you'd like to get involved in Home Tour but are not able to commit a great deal of time, this may be the job for you. The party committee does not really get busy until approximately four to six weeks before the date of Home Tour. (The 1992 tour will be held on Sunday, August 23rd.)

Anyone interested in volunteering for this position should contact Peg Du Fresne, Chair of the general Home Tour committee, at 482-8666. (P.D.)

FOR AN AU NATUREL FLOWER FESTIVAL IN RIVERSIDE PARK, WATCH IN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO FOR THE MASSES OF BLUE SCILLAS TO BURST INTO BLOOM ALONG THE WEST BANK OF THE PARK, ESPECIALLY BEHIND THE MUSEUM AND CHERYL FARMER'S.

"If thou hast three pennies, with one buy flowers for thy soul." (Old English Proverb)

**YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION
HERITAGE NEWS
510 Pearl Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Jack Harris, Editor(485-2155)
Lisa Walters, Assistant Editor(485-3683)**

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May 1992

Ypsilanti, Mi

MEETING: Wednesday, May 20, 1992 - 6:30 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENT: 11TH ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
(18th ANNUAL HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKER AWARDS PROGRAM)

LOCATION: LADIES' LITERARY CLUB, 218 N. WASHINGTON

LAST SPRING we reported the weather "as unpredictable as ever." This spring . . . well, wait a minute, **WHAT SPRING?** April will go down, apparently, as the wettest spring in history--and certainly one of the most sunless months that most of us can remember. May, we can only hope, will prove itself more amenable to our pleasure and present itself as we would like to see it: lots of sun, moderate temperatures, lilacs that linger, pink magnolias that don't fall in an hour, gentle rains only when needed, birds singing and nesting in every nook and cranny around every corner of the premises; primroses, English daisies, pansies, tulips smiling on all sides . . .

Ha!!! Yet some things are not a dream (or will the above dream BE a dream by the time this is printed?), and one is the Annual Heritage Foundation **BANQUET**, now a tradition for many of us in this city of contrasts: dereliction and decay vs. superb restoration and recovery. The Foundation's objective is to focus on the positive: to seek out and recognize those shining examples of commitment to excellence--people who have given of time and effort to restore and refresh their properties--determined to beat the odds against those who don't care. We come to our banquet to celebrate this best of old cities in Southeast Michigan.

DON RANDAZZO, Chair of the Marker committee, and his troupe--Bill Nickels, Hank Prebys, and Rick Leyshock--have come to the Board with a list of buildings for recognition and have received approval. **DENIS SCHMIEDEKE** (the Foundation's in-house architect) has given his considered (and in some cases, pondered) judgment and identified each property formally in terms of style. This year there are seven awards to be given, and owners will be the **HONORED GUESTS** at our banquet. (continued on next page . . .)

MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS ALIKE ARE INVITED to this occasion, held in one of Ypsilanti's most historic structures. Guests will gather in the long dining room for punch at 6:30; at 7:00 the dinner will begin, as guests line up to choose from the variety of dishes provided by **POTLUCK**, a marvelous American tradition that elicits the best from everybody. This system has worked wonders for us in the past, under the dedicated direction of Co-chairs, **PENNY SCHREIBER** and **KAREN NICKELS**.

No speaker, only a short awards program--and lots of conviviality! If you wish to attend and haven't as yet been called, simply give Karen a call at 483-8896 or Penny at 483-5688 and suggest what kind of dish you could best contribute. Marker recipients are, of course, not expected to bring a dish, since they are our honored guests. Space is limited, however; so do call ahead for a **RESERVATION**.

AWARDS RECIPIENTS

SANDRA and GERALD HOAG, for their residence at
220 South Huron
Style: Italianate and Classical Revival, c. 1870

LOUIS and JANE ROME, for their house at
109 South Huron
Style: Queen Anne, c. 1885

REBECCA LEWIS, for her residence at
416 East Cross
Style: Queen Anne, 1873

BRAD and PAMELA CLARK, for their residence at
310 Maple
Style: Italianate, c. 1890

WARREN LEWIS, for his residence at
410 Oak
Style: Builder's Vernacular, 1890

PETER COUSINS and SHARRYL SULLIVAN, for their residence at
325 East Cross
Style: Queen Anne

MARK and LAURIE FELDKAMP, for the house at
138 Hawkins
Style: Queen Anne, 1895



FARMERS' MARKET IN FULL SWING

Don't forget to visit the Ypsilanti Farmer's Market in the Old Freight House in Depot Town. It's especially alive this time of year. Your editor stopped by this past Saturday and found honey of such superb quality compared to what he had bought in the super market that it was like ambrosia of the gods compared to Karo syrup. (The latter will now be saved for cooking.) He also bought some beautiful Golden Delicious apples that were recently taken from the winter cooler at Karpo Farms near Tipton. They're both decorative AND delicious: but keep most in the refrigerator, unless they're all eaten immediately by the kids! (If anyone thinks that anything from the West Coast can compare with a Michigan apple, let him or her think again.) He also bought bananas, lettuce, zucchini, onions, and mushrooms from Malcolm. He might well also have bought wonderful meats (especially sausages found only there and Amish chickens), breads, cheeses, and eggs from Missina's. But the great find was the flat of robust pansies in colorful bloom, \$3.00 cheaper than the flat he had just bought at a fine local nursery, less colorful. So there! Get on down to Depot Town!



MORE ON GARDENS

We hope that readers found our last issue, dedicated to gardening, informative and useful in getting started this year. Now IS the time to make a difference. From Hank Prebys and Joe Mattimoe, whose garden is quite visible from the street at the northwest corner of the junction of North Grove and Hall Streets, come these two additional notes that might help to galvanize readers into gardening action:

Just start. We contemplated the planting of a yew hedge for four or five years before doing it. The job wasn't any cheaper and growth is four or five years behind what it could have been if the shrubs had been planted then. The same goes for planting trees. The longer you wait, the less chance you'll have an opportunity to appreciate your efforts in your lifetime. The other suggestion we would like to make concerns the use of mulch and soaker hoses (the latter made from recycled tires). The use of soaker hoses has helped us to waste less water on the garden; the mulches, of course, limit evaporation while keeping down weeds. For us, the mulch is also advantageous in that it improves our sandy soil by adding organic material.





THREE IMPORTANT LOCAL GROUPS COMMITTED TO PRESERVATION

Three separate groups in Ypsilanti work to promote awareness of history and architecture in the community: the Ypsilanti Historical Society, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, and the Historic District Commission. Many people, residents as well as newcomers, still seem confused about the specific functions of each group. We hope the following will clarify:

I. **The Ypsilanti Historical Society** is a membership organization, open to all interested persons, whose chief interest is history in terms of people and events. Founded in 1965, the Historical Society operates the Historical Museum and Archives and gathers facts and artifacts related to Ypsilanti history. Ypsilanti is very fortunate to have both a City Historian and a City archivist. In the 1950's Ypsilanti City Council created the position of City Historian, a position which was first filled by Louis White, then by Foster Fletcher, and now by Doris Milliman. The City Historian, who has the duty to collect and preserve items of historical interest to the Ypsilanti area, is appointed from a list of nominees recommended by the Historical Society. The City Archivist is employed by the City and that position is currently held by Billie Zolkosky. The Historical Museum collections were first housed in the old Quirk mansion at 206 North Huron, later moved to the basement of the building which is now the Ypsilanti District Library, and, in 1970, moved into the City-owned historic house at 220 North Huron Street. The Archives are an extremely valuable resource, containing pictures and information on significant persons, buildings, and events in Ypsilanti history. For more information, visit the Museum and Archives at 220 North Huron or call 482-4990.

II. **The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation** is a membership organization chiefly interested the architectural heritage of Ypsilanti--in other words, historic preservation. The Foundation was formed in 1974 to save the historic Towner House when it was under threat of demolition, and for a number of years the Foundation leased the house from its owner, the Presbyterian Church, and maintained the property. But the Foundation's purposes quickly expanded to the preservation of all historic structures in Ypsilanti through education. The Foundation is responsible for the "historic Structure" markers on many of our buildings, publication of an annual calendar featuring local historic structures, and bimonthly educational programs, open to non-members as well as members, concerning subjects related to history and preservation. The Heritage News, which promotes awareness of issues that relate to



preservation, is published bimonthly from September to May, with an additional "Good News" edition that appears at Heritage Festival. The Foundation's major fund raiser is the annual Historic Home Tour, held during Heritage Festival each August. For more information, call Jack Harris at 485-2155.

III. The Historic District Commission is a City administrative agency, created by City Council in 1978 to administer the Historic District Ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance is "to safeguard the heritage of the City of Ypsilanti by preserving a district which reflects elements of its cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history and natural environments; to stabilize and improve property values in such district; to foster civic beauty and pride; to strengthen the local economy; to promote the use of the historic district for the education, pleasure and welfare of the citizens of the City of Ypsilanti and of the State of Michigan; and, to encourage new buildings and development which will be harmonious with the existing historic buildings and neighborhoods but will not necessarily be of the same architectural style, the purpose being to develop the Historic District as a vital living area in which each succeeding generation may build with the quality and sensitivity of past generations." (see City Ordinance N. 496) The Commission is composed of seven members, appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of City Council, and serving without pay. The Commission meets twice a month to review all applications for building permits in the Historic District for work that will have an exterior effect. No work can begin until it has been approved by the Commission. All Commission members are residents of Ypsilanti; currently, five members live in the Historic District and four of those own property in the District. HDC meetings are held in City Hall, the first and third Tuesday of the month and are open to the public. To confirm specific dates and times, call City Hall information, 483-1530.

Each of these organizations makes unique and significant contributions to the preservation of Ypsilanti history. Working separately, yet together in commitment, these groups of dedicated local citizens have helped Ypsilanti not only survive but develop its image of a unique place with a proud history and a promising future. Their efforts are at the heart of our reputation as a city with an astonishing number of citizens who care.





COUNCIL MEMBER LARUE ARGUES FOR CITY HALL REN-0

Barry LaRue is ready and willing to talk with anyone interested in discussing the issue of renovating Ypsilanti City Hall. Essentially, his concerns are two: first, the building is approaching a crisis state: there are roof and heating problems AND there are regulations that need to be met in terms of safety and A.D.A. guidelines (wheelchair access, etc.); second, while the city has, over the past ten or fifteen years, put its heart and soul into development of its unique historic character--including the annual Heritage Festival, and private investors have transformed entire streetscapes of buildings (both North and South Huron are perhaps the most obvious examples--as well as downtown), the City offices themselves have moved from an historic structure (Old Town Hall: 300 N. Huron) into their present home, also an historic building, but buried under the notorious "cheese grater," the metal covering so stylish in the '50's.

Now LaRue believes that we are running out of time before a crisis occurs and we're forced to make a hasty decision about the problems concerning the physical structure of City Hall. Moreover, he believes that we as a city should commit ourselves to a modified restoration plan (termed by the architect as Concept IIB) that, while not being a pristine restoration, would at least give us the essentials in terms of maintenance and safety and, at the same time, project a commitment from the city toward the concept of historic preservation so established in the private sector of the community.

Without going into all details, the plan would add 1,200 badly needed square feet onto the third and fourth floors at the rear and east sides. There would be a new elevator to meet A.D.A. requirements. The two or three stairways now at the back would be drawn into one. Certain offices would be moved to the ground floor: assessor's and treasurer's, to join the clerk's. The fourth floor would become Council Chambers. Such commissions as HDC would also meet there. Seating for the public would be increased.

Originally, the building had a steep-banked roof line, reminiscent of a French chateau. A modified version of this would be rebuilt, the brick walls at the sides would be cleaned up on the upper stories (and the windows would at last allow inhabitants to look out--and GET OUT, perhaps, in an emergency!), and the lower floor would, hopefully, be at least in part restored to its original stone surface (some of which is still there, hidden).

Again, LaRue is more than happy to talk with anyone interested in the concept. We recommend you take advantage of his offer: communicate with your Council person.



HISTORIC SOUTH SIDE ASSOCIATION POINTS THE WAY AGAIN

Our hats are off to the Historic Southside Neighborhood Association! They have had the city ordinance officer come to a meeting to explain the city ordinances pertaining to trash, weeds, abandoned cars, and other nuisances that can make a neighborhood look run down and inhospitable. Then they had **Officer Malcolm Winn (Crime Prevention, 483-8932)** talk to their group about the neighborhood watch program. Sunday, May 3rd, they combined all this information into a productive (and fun) neighborhood walk and spring clean-up. A pick-up truck was filled with rubbish that was removed from the streets, yards, and empty lots of a four by four block area. Problems for the ordinance officer were noted for reporting the next day. New friends were made as they went along, knocking on doors, distributing copies of the H.S.S.N.A. newsletter, explaining the neighborhood watch program and inviting people to come to the next meeting. Several neighbors were so impressed with the energy of the group that they offered to donate money. McGruff, the crime-stopping dog, was unable to make it, but the children were treated to a ride in a police car. The new foot patrol officer assigned to the neighborhood was on hand to get acquainted with the area. After about three hours of work the group broke for pizza, compliments of **Domino's**.

HSSNA has the right idea. Historic or brand new, any neighborhood looks better picked up! Those of us who are motivated and able bodied can police our own yards. We can lend a hand to neighbors who are older and to public properties like the library and museum; in addition, we also owe it to ourselves and to our neighborhood to ask the ordinance officer to nudge recalcitrant or absentee landlords. Their neglect reflects poorly on the whole neighborhood. Learn the ordinances! They are there for our use! If you live on the southside and would like to join the next gathering of HSSNA, call **Bobbi Suthard, 483-4809.** (C.F.)



INVESTMENTS: Anyone interested in investing in Old Town Restaurant, call Donna White, 662-5846.

THE STORY OF THREE HOUSES: A Tribute to Joe Lawrence

Anyone interested in historic preservation should do at least a "drive by" this spring of three properties in Ypsilanti: 320 and 206 South Huron and 601 Emmet. All are owned by Joe Lawrence and all have been given special treatment at the hands of Joe, his architect Lis Knibbe, and his master carpenter, John Wilson. It is interesting to view them in one run, as each has its own character and 'class' and represents its own problems in historic preservation.

The first, **320 South Huron**--at the NW corner of Huron and Buffalo--is quite a simple cottage. People who drive by it may have already have forgotten what it looked like before renovation began: covered with eight inch aluminum siding, stark, characterless. Rarely has the HDC allowed vinyl siding within the district, but this (if it is to be used) represents a test case. Once the old aluminum was removed and it was clear that there was nothing worth saving underneath, a plan was presented to create a perfect illusion of wood siding. Vinyl was used for the clapboards; aluminum was used on the trim. Detail was followed to the letter: classical returns in the gables, sills, drip edges--everything to create the illusion of a wood-frame house. The front was given character by the addition of a simple three-pillar porch, a feature that draws attention away from the picture window behind it; every detail, while simple, was taken into consideration. Note the addition of simple 'capitals' and base on the pillars, the beaded ceiling, the tongue and groove flooring and the minimal skirt. This attention to detail extends right round the house. In a neighborhood of mostly more substantial houses, this now stands as a model of careful improvement.

The second, at **206 South Huron**, is Ypsilanti's most recent miracle of restoration projects. Yet no miracle at all: it is a labor of love, again, involving Mr. Lawrence (owner), Lis Knibbe (architect), and John Wilson (carpenter). Again, most people who have driven by that property over the years have already forgotten was it looked like not so long ago: covered with aluminum siding of the most unattractive variety and in dire need of attention. Attention it has, for it has been transformed from ugly spook to Ypsilanti's best and most beautiful example of the Stick style (though some have referred to it as Eastlake Victorian: for proof that it falls into the category "Stick," see What Style Is It? (p. 24), published by the National Trust). The large classical porch, added later, has been kept, bays have been largely rebuilt, and an addition at the back has been integrated into the carefully detailed design, with porches following the surviving details of the original, with a color scheme that accentuates the ornate character of the unique woodwork detail.

But if the exterior is transformed, the interior is in the process of receiving a thorough, repeat THOROUGH, restoration and renovation. Your editor had the good fortune to have a tour of the interior the other day, with John Wilson, from top to bottom. First, the basement is itself an addition, dug by a fraternity earning cash for one of its own projects! The heating system is a miracle of detail. There is an apartment in the front here, called "the garden level," with exposed stone

bay and heated seating, and large windows for extra light at this lower level. The back apartment on the ground floor, with its own porch, is already rented. The middle apartment, off the porch on the south side, is a bi-level, with every detail lovingly considered, including new oak stair rail. But it is the front apartment, itself larger than many houses these days, that astonishes. Eleven and a half foot ceilings on the ground floor, three sets of enormous sliding double door panels, elaborate plaster moldings at the ceiling, even more elaborate and beautiful plaster medallions (that were rebuilt to restore the originals), fine wide oak floors, a faux marble fireplace: all will contribute to the sense of spacious elegance. Then the front hall with its double entry in wood and beveled glass (in unique diamond pattern), of walnut on the inside and an unidentified wood on the exterior, its massive stairwell, with elaborate newel post and rail with patterned designs cut into the flat boards where spindles are usually found: all contribute to decorative uniqueness. Upstairs there are three major rooms, one of which will contain a fireplace and be perfect for a study. Of course, both up and down, the windows are massive. There are sprinkler systems throughout the house. Woods are mainly pine, oak, mahogany, walnut, possibly butternut. Each unit is equipped with electric and telephone outlets to allow for the maximum of modern communication systems.

The third property, at **601 Emmet** (at the junction of Perrin, near the campus of E.M.U.) now shines like a star on a darkling plain. It, too, stands defiant against the dismal maintenance of some of the surrounding properties. Again, Lis Knibbe has imaginatively transformed a sadly sagging property into a viable first rate set of rental units, while at the same time enhancing the Victorian character of the building, adding gables and windows where necessary to give finish to the whole. Inside, the woodwork, all new, is in the bullseye pattern to maintain the aura of the Victorian age.

This property, along with the two houses up Emmet recently restored by Triangle Apartments, represents a pattern of excellence in rental properties near E.M.U. Other landlords take note. And **City Council**, we would urge you, first--before you make any other decisions--to take a field trip to this site, noting the surrounding properties, the garbage everywhere on any day of the week, including immediately after pick-up day. We would ask you to sit and deliberate as to why this city has to tolerate such filth; why--with the good staff in building inspections and property maintenance this city has--why citizens have to walk or drive through such filth. Then Council members should walk up Perrin to Cross, and beyond, to the President's house at Forest, noting the devastation and asking what this city can do about such a disgrace.

Meanwhile, those who care should take the drive-by tour of what Mr. Joseph Lawrence has wrought upon this town, just in these three properties alone. You will not be disappointed. While none of them is completely finished, we can expect to see all of them completed (or very nearly) by Festival time. But go now--and enjoy. And if you too are troubled by the appearance of the surroundings at 601 Emmet (and from thence especially northward towards the Stachlewitz (601 Forest) and the President's house, call your Council person and ask why we have to tolerate such poor maintenance of property when there are ordinances in place.

YPSILANTI 2002 ANNOUNCES NEXT MEETING

Ypsilanti 2002, a fledgling group of civic-minded citizens interested in good government and improving the city's image, both physically and psychologically, moved into its second year (hence, the '2' replaces the '1,' as in 2000 and 2). Image problems were at the center of discussions. Out of these, the 2002 group developed a list of "expected outcomes" toward which they would work. These include: 1). a network of good press; 2). a riverside park system that extends along the Huron River from Gallup Park to Ford Lake through Ypsilanti; 3). wider understanding and use of city ordinances; 4). greater appreciation for the activities of our police and fire departments. There were, of course, other topics proposed as well, but you get the drift. Ypsilanti 2002 is a city-wide group. If you are interested in joining their next meeting on the topic of "Image," call **Cheryl Farmer**, 481-1804.

Going to Williamsburg?

Lynn Tabor has a "Patriot's Pass" to Williamsburg, VA., good through the end of July--**FREE**. Call 481-1633.

YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION
510 Pearl Street
Heritage News
Jack Harris, Editor(485-2155)
Lisa Walters, Assistant Editor(485-3683)

Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

AUGUST 1992 ** GOOD NEWS EDITION!! ** Ypsilanti, MI

THE YPSILANTI HERITAGE FESTIVAL
August 21, 22, 23

SPECIAL EVENT: 15TH ANNUAL YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION
HOME TOUR

DATE: Sunday, August 23, Noon to 5:00 p.m.

TICKETS: Adults \$7.00 - Seniors \$6.00 - Children \$4.00

Available at ticket booths in the Festival area:

1. At the entryway into Riverside Park
2. In front of the Historic Museum on Huron Street

HOMES ON TOUR

310 Maple	Pam and Brad Clark
The Crickett House 1200 Washtenaw	Bob and Sue Crawley
The Hutchinson House 600 N. River	High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
929 Pearl	Mary and Jim Streeter
935 Pearl	Victoria Patterson
302 Elm	Will and Bea Otis
218 N. Adams	First Congregational Church

SEE HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PROGRESS
VISIT SOME OF YPSILANTI'S FASCINATING HISTORIC STRUCTURES!

IT HAPPENED IN YPSILANTI IN 1991-92

The Heritage Foundation presents its **ANNUAL GOOD NEWS ISSUE**, reporting on some of the improvements which have occurred in Ypsilanti over the past year, for our own delight and that of our Festival visitors. It also allows us an opportunity to say Thank You to all of those who have helped to make this a better place to live. This News issue is the Foundation's gift to everyone who cares for and about Ypsilanti. We're delighted you came; we hope you'll

COME BACK TO YPSILANTI.



WILKINSON-LEWIS-GREENE HOUSE CELEBRATION

Most readers will recognize the name "**The Lewis House**"--that splendid Italianate at 415 N. Huron--and many of us remember Miss Evangeline Lewis, who lived there for many, many years. Some will remember Evangeline's mother, Mrs. Lewis, and other members of the family. But now that the house has a new owner who has dedicated himself to restoring the property to pristine glory, a new title has emerged. "Wilkinson" comes from James Wilkinson, son of a prosperous Ypsilanti businessman, who built the house. "Greene," of course, comes from the name of the new owner: Earl W. Greene of Ann Arbor.

June 14, 1992, was a very happy day for the house, for Mr. Greene presented the community with an unforgettable celebration of its restoration and the community's dedication to historic preservation. Since the first resident of the house was a Scottish immigrant, Mr. Greene decided to give his party a Scottish theme. Authentic bag-pipes played in and around the house; a Scottish dancer performed, and the dining room table was set with all things Scottish--not only the delectable treats (with tea and coffee poured by Virginia Johnson and punch poured by Billie Zolkosky, supported by other Museum staff) but right down to the flowers that included a Scottish thistle! (This kind of lovely "table" was duplicated upstairs in the front bedroom as well.) Flowers throughout the house were superb, too. Mr. Greene was there to discuss the restoration work that has occurred and future plans. The woodwork has been restored to perfection. Especially exciting to the approximately 400+ guests who toured the house, however, were the stenciled ceilings in most rooms upstairs and down. These were discovered in the process of restoration and are being restored by Raymond E. Moore of Toledo (who may, incidentally, be on the Foundation's program series this coming season). Although the ceiling painting was destroyed in the dining room because of water damage from an upstairs bath, enough of the pattern was left to make an exact copy, which in the future, it is hoped, will be used to duplicate the original. Mr. Greene has added many of his own antiques and has purchased such items as appropriate mirrors for over the mantels in the reception room and the front parlor.

The weather was ideal for the celebration, with the tall windows upstairs fully open and air and light flowing through. Those of us who remember Miss Lewis know how delighted and proud she would have been that day. We recall how Miss Lewis participated in the forerunner of the Heritage Foundation Annual Home Tour when in 1976 the Foundation held a walking tour of North Huron Street, calling attention to its historic grandeur before its glory had been revitalized as you see it

today. Miss Lewis, too old to open her doors to a tour, would wait just inside on that windy spring day and each time a tour group arrived with guide, she would open the front door and come out onto the porch to share her memories of the house.

Mr. Greene certainly proved himself a worthy successor to that gracious tradition. He was the host to perfection, seemingly never tiring, always ready to respond to questions and help guests to appreciate what they were seeing. He gave the day a special focus by inviting the distinguished former Governor John B. Swainson, President of the Michigan Historical Commission, to preside at an awards ceremony at which three of Ypsilanti's many dedicated preservationists--Dr. Marshall McLennan, Director, Eastern Michigan University's Historic Preservation program; Jane Bird Schmiedeke, Chairperson, Ypsilanti Historic District Commission, and Dr. Jack Harris, member of the board, Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation--were awarded the new Wilkinson-Greene Thistle Award. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if that could become an annual event in Ypsilanti, even though the house, once it's occupied, couldn't serve as gathering place as it did this year?)

It should be said, however, that Mr. Greene proved his humanity not so much on the proud day itself, but the following, when he escorted Mr. Art Howard, unable to attend the ceremony itself, on a full tour of the premises. (It was Mr. Howard, you may recall, who made the house "his baby"--its protector and advocate--during the interim when the Museum owned the building.) The two shared their knowledge of the house. But it was astonishing how willing and gracious Mr. Greene was, after such an exhausting day, to give Mr. Howard a very personal tour. He was the gentleman to the end. Mr. Howard thus had an unforgettable tour of his beloved "Lewis" house, now entering its new life as the Wilkinson-Lewis-Greene house. **EARL GREENE, YPSILANTI LOVES YOU!**

THREE CHEERS FOR THE YPSILANTI PRESS FOR SUCH WONDERFUL ARTICLES AS THE ONE ON MISS VIRGINIA COOPER!!!



TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

AND SEE THE HURON RIVER AS YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE. You can't miss the new entryway into Riverside Park cut at the NW corner of the Michigan Avenue bridge, with two flights of steps, separated by a ramp, all high above the Huron River below. The steps lead directly down onto a large deck, and the whole structure is made safe for pedestrians (watch those little ones as you would near any water!) by sturdy pipe rails painted red. Once on the deck, you see the great arch of the bridge and, looking through to the south, you see the mighty Huron as you have never seen it before. In that area just south of the bridge, the banks are "almost as nature left them." Just behind you on the west is the great east front of Materials Unlimited, that Art Deco (note the tiles) building that was once a car dealership. (This platform must at night be a great place from which to view that establishment, with its ever changing display of stained glass windows.) You can leave the deck by a ramp leading directly into the park. Incidentally, the next stage in the long-term development of the Huron from Gallup Park to Ford Lake will be the building of a dock from this deck diagonally under the

Michigan Avenue bridge to the east bank behind Al Walters' shop on Water Street. There, the plan is to build a dock-like structure in the river but along the bank, leading to the new River's Edge Park and toward Gilbert Park, where there is still a major local baseball field and a playground; or, if you wish, you may cross a new cast iron pedestrian bridge to, again, the west side of the Huron and Waterworks Park, adjacent to the Ford Plant. As yet there is no footpath that will take you from there directly to the wonderful walkway at and on Ford Lake. That, and the linking up of Frog Island with the park system to the west, up stream beyond Railroad Street, is all that's left in the chain. (We should not forget all the good work of **ANDY SMITH** and his crew in cleaning up this river park system. Another community hands-on project we can all take pride in! Thanks, and every thanks, Andy, for your perseverance and leadership!)



ON CAMPUS DEVELOPMENTS

THE ONE-ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE, "looking more like a Norman Rockwell church than a school" (as one reporter termed it), is now ensconced on the campus of E.M.U. and you should make a point of doing at least a drive-by to view it, sheltered by the woods behind the Rackham building. Donated as it was by the Geddes family and moved to campus from a country road between Saline and Ann Arbor, the building has received a great deal of attention from the many people involved in establishing it as a living museum, and more who took part in the long process of fund-raising and planning of its restoration; but three people, at least, stand out: **DEAN ROCKWELL**, 80, who spear-headed the drive and served as chair throughout its entire development stage; **MRS. JOHN PORTER**, whose devotion to the project has been unwavering; and **DR. SCOTT WESTERMAN**, former chair of the School of Education and now project director for outfitting the building. He and the recently formed group known as The Friends of the Schoolhouse are looking for such items as desks, an abacus, pull-down maps and charts, lunch pails, pictures of presidents (especially, of course, Lincoln and Washington), and perhaps even a pot-bellied stove--anything that relates to the one-room school house experience. The committee is particularly interested in items from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, since this particular school was built in the 1890s (replacing an 1852 brick structure). Fortunately, Jerry Robbins, the new Dean of the School of Education, is also dedicated to the success of the project. He and Westerman, in fact, hope that the building can be ready in the fall for conferences, tours, small classes, and special gatherings. Anyone wishing to donate either money or artifacts (all tax-deductible) should contact the **School Education at E.M.U., 487-1414.**

IN THE CAMPUS TOWN AREA, the best news is still the success of at least two new restaurants there which complement the older established **OLD CHINA** and **THE TOWER**: the first is **LA FIESTA MEXICANA**, now well known for its "specials" (ask the vivacious owner for them) and the other is **DaLaT**, the new Vietnamese restaurant at the SE corner of Cross and Ballard. If you order, for example, "Saigon soup" you won't regret it.

DOWNTOWN TODAY

JUST ABOVE **MATERIALS UNLIMITED**, you should note the new establishment called **PERFECTIONS**, hair stylists and one of the prettiest shops to be seen in Downtown Ypsilanti in a long time.

Next door to this is another new shop called **CURRY OUT**, an Indian foods carry out place.

UP N. HURON, note the prettiest shop there, too: **FASHIONS by G & T UNLIMITED**.

Of course, it is surely the new **MCAULEY HEALTH SERVICE** that should receive the prize for the best kept grounds. (What a change from the rut worn dirt "parking lot" that for so long stood there.)

JUST WEST UP MICHIGAN AVENUE, you should note the new clothing business called **MIRRORS**, located where Morey Jewelers used to be. That whole area, once a nightmare of bad taste transformations of facades--one was in black and yellow vertical stripes, remember?!--is now almost completely restored, except for the anchor building on the corner and the former Mellencamp's.

RALPH ELLIS, of **YPSI CYCLE** and the Historic District Commission, is still at work on his second building, 116 W. Michigan. An entire new store front has been built which duplicates a typical front of the nineteenth century, with double entry doors and a side entry to the spaces above, which Ralph hopes to see as apartments soon, as he expands his business into the ground floor space.

JUST ABOUT EVERYONE AGREES that making those as-yet empty spaces above store fronts into living quarters is the way to go downtown. Indeed, one owner of a yet unfinished loft apartment downtown has told me it's already rented at a hefty price!

BIG NEWS: NOBLE'S CUSTOM CLOTHING has not only bought the old **Mellencamp building**, but moved into that much larger space as well. Congratulations!

We may note, too, that just about all the trees and shrubs around the **GARY M. OWEN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS** have taken hold since last year's planting. Perhaps this damp, cool summer has helped. As regards this branch of E.M.U., we must say again that the foot traffic of friendly students is a welcome addition to the neighborhood!

Councilman Barry LaRue, you may want to know, hasn't given up on his project to see City Hall renovated. He, however, denies any part in a recent auto "accident" in which a car ran the curb, hit City Hall just at the critical corner, and demolished some of the granite paneling, though he admits seeing it as "a move in the right direction!"

Finally (though obviously we haven't covered all the "Good News" downtown), everyone should take a look at our new **AATA BUS DEPOT** at the corner of Adams and Pearl. This is surely a pleasant architectural addition to the neighborhood, as well as a convenient source of transportation. A study in blue, its design was predicated on the idea that, especially in an historic district, buildings should fit into the neighborhood; hence, the use of pillars, gables, cupola, etc.--yet at the same time reflecting modern design.



GARDENS, GARDENS EVERYWHERE

On the East Side ...

The most obvious and telling **NEWS** to report (the "GOOD NEWS") is the wave of interest in gardening and the upkeep of grounds that has developed all over Ypsilanti, more impressive this year, perhaps, than any other in recent times. Therefore, we would like to comment briefly on some of the particularly noticeable sites where gardening is going on. You only need look about you, on almost any street in town, to see the pervasive shift toward front gardens (and sometimes side, as well as in back). Perhaps even more obvious is the development of interest in pots--pots everywhere, all shapes and sizes, and displayed in every which way imaginable--on the porch, steps, in the yard; and the use of boxes--at windows, on porch rails, anywhere they can be readily tended. Nothing has happened in the way of Good News quite so obvious as this development in the attention people are paying to their grounds, always a sure sign of a caring "civilized" community. The following list is only representative, you understand; but it will give you some idea of how Ypsilanti is expressing itself in gardens:

First, the **Anshutz** home at **101 E. Forest**. Incidentally, the porch and trim white looks whiter and even more wonderful this year on that pivotal landmark. But it's still the spacious gardens, visible from all sides, that make it such an attractive landscape. The interest there has (as it has all over town) crept across River St. to the opposite corner, where petunias flood the little bed.

At the junction of Forest and River, too, we see one of the finest landscape grounds in this area: the estate property now known as **High Scope**, formerly the **Hutchinson mansion** (of S & H Green Stamps). It is a classic Victorian landscape, with round beds in the center of expanses of lawn and wisteria climbing over the newly rebuilt porte-cochere. Let's not take it for granted: let's take the time, at Festival or afterward, for a walk around the estate, from Oak and along River to Forest to the alleys that only slightly separate it from the rest of the neighborhood.

By way of contrast, **311 E. Forest**, represents one sample of a little house with the pretty garden front, undoubtedly more typical of what's going on in gardening around Ypsilanti.

On **Oak**, note again this year **Warren Lewis'** little cottage at **410**, where a meandering line of white impatiens against the dark colors of the cottage make the place even more magical.

Don't miss, in passing, the established Victorian grounds at **302 Oak**.

On **Maple**, above all don't miss the old cottage at 322, which last year was covered with brown (very brown) tar-paper brick, with a forties metal canopy over the front. Now the canopy and the "brick" are gone

and the fine old clapboard exposed and painted an old-fashioned rose, with lots of white trim. The make-shift little "glass porch" at the side has also been removed and replaced with classic pillars, making an open, but covered, front off the sitting room; the basic Greek Revival style of the front has been exposed, with the Queen Anne elaboration in the gable tied in. What could be more "American"? Thanks for all this the hard work and dedication: Marjean Rose and Jim Soraruf, the new owners.

STOP AND LOOK AT the transformation just down the street at **310**, too. Simplicity itself, an American classic, in blue-green (or is it green-blue?) with beige trim and burnt red on the windows and door. Pam and Brad Clark, the owners, have done a most tasteful transformation there.

On **East Cross**, don't miss the wildly old-fashioned garden at **213**. Sheer romanticism!

YOU CAN'T MISS IT: Becky Lewis' house at 416 East Cross in the shades of purple, with white picket fence and petunias to match the jolly color scheme.

Over on **North Grove**, one should note the flowers around the front the the glorious **Gilbert mansion** (not so many years ago a derelict wreck!). And while looking again at that monument that holds so much of Ypsilanti's history, turn and note again the Gothic cottage at **301** where the clipped and topiaried hedges are each passing year looking more and more like Hidcote Manor garden in England.

SOMETIME SOON take in the best thing that has happened in **Depot Town** this past year (besides the building of the Crossing Guard Tower): As **Tom Dodd** so aptly describes them: "an outdoor patio/garden at the **Sidetrack** and a raised rear deck at **Aubree's**." These, he estimates, "will, no doubt, bring a whole new appreciation of the traditional reciprocity of railroads and saloons. Sanitized as today's local examples may be, the legend of Casey Jones lives on in these places and they remain a center of social activity for the neighborhood." (Depot Town Rag, May 1992) Kudos to Tom, by the way, for his undying loyalty to his old haunt and his untiring love for writing about it!

Finally, something to look forward to: Keep an eye on the **Millworks building**, that historic industrial structure on River Street, now best known as home to the Ypsi Co-op. Expect to see work begin on the facade at the south end, restoring something of the original window and door configuration of the original. (Already, the back of the building has been rebuilt, necessary due to the constant jolting from passing trains over the years!) The owners, **Corrine Sikorski and Joseph Hayes**, will have help from limited city funds that are derived from repayment on earlier loans. This is a pleasant turn around from the time only four or five years ago when the city ordered demolition, due to the structural problems, and the HDC denied the permit. Oh, happy day!





On the South Side . . .

While many specific improvements have occurred on the South Side, the most notable development there is the ever-growing sense of neighborhood and the good works done under the aegis of the long-established **Historic South Side Neighborhood Association**. First, they have made contact with the owner of Joe's Liquor Store at Huron and Harriet, one result of which is the establishment of a guard at the door to help with security issues. Another change that the HSSNA has brought about through interaction with city officials is the clearing up of certain derelict elements on the 10.8 lot that represents the south entry to the city. A broken fence has been removed and a major hole filled in. The group (and surely they speak for a number of city residents) would like to see this area developed as a "Welcome" entry to the city.

Perhaps the most memorable event of the year for the HSSNA was the **Children's Recognition Night**, held at **AME Brown Chapel**, with the cooperation of **Reverend and Mary Hatter**. This was a program for the children of the neighborhood--to give them a sense of pride through recognition. Each participant was asked to report on his/her favorite subject in or out of school and certificates were awarded at the end of the program. Coffee and dessert were served, as well as refreshments for the kids. It was an extension of the group's raison d'etre: bring the neighborhood together, instilling pride.

More obvious but equally newsworthy are the developments in beautification in the south side neighborhood. Look, for example, at the beautiful plantings around the **Gilbert Residence** on South Huron, done especially in thanks for the wonderful cooperation the organization has had from the management of the Gilbert as a meeting place for the group. Do look, next time you're passing Gilbert and, if you have a chance, check out the lovely gardens at the back, all of which, while adding to the homelike quality of the residence, also offers the community at large another visual symbol of Pride in Neighborhood. (Planting, we're told, was done in shifts, over a two-day period!)

On **South Washington**, note especially how nice **220** now looks, (not so long ago sadly neglected) with red geraniums and impatiens to offset the pale grey and white of the classic building itself. Now it complements its old brick neighbor at **221** across the street, where new plantings of coleus in the margin and hostas around the foundation help "finish" that very special property.

It is the **HSSNA**, again, which has had the the greatest impact in transforming the image of **South Huron** through the many plantings along that major entryway--AND IT SHOWS. Note, especially, our "**Tara**" at **220** (What a transformation in grounds in such a few years!). Pause for a moment at **210** and see if you can recall the sad grey structure that stood there only a few years ago, before Joe Lawrence put his crew to work. And notice **Bill Fennel's 202**, where you see new flowers behind the cast iron fence. Indeed, it was the HSSNA who planted the grounds by the **Ypsilanti Public Library** on Michigan Avenue (while the window boxes were again 'done' by staff.) **Cheryl Farmer**, we're told, offered not only her expertise on gardening but many hours of hard labor.

More specifically, thanks should go to **Sandy and Jerry Hoag** for many "good turns," such as building window boxes for neighbors who expressed an interest but were unable to assemble them themselves. The Hoags: real neighbors, people who get things done--they're to be singled out for commendation and thanks!

By the way, can anyone else remember the days--not twenty years ago--when the local real estate agent, after you insisted on seeing one of the battered but beautiful properties in this neighborhood, would say to you: "Well, o.k., let's go; but I'm not getting out of the car!"? Or can you only remember in more recent years (how could you forget?) the warm friendly reception the neighborhood gave visitors during its Neighborhood Christmas Walk?

Finally, it should be noted that the Association will have a float in the Festival Parade that focuses upon children, with a long-time resident ("over fifty years"), **Mrs. Manikos**, as person of honor.

FOR SALE: Because of its significance (and due to a personal call from the agent), we would like to inform our readers that a major house on South Huron is now on the market: 302 S. Huron--one of the most historic neighborhoods in the city, strong neighborhood association, near new park developments, the river, downtown, and the public library; an authentic Italianate with over 2500 square feet of living space, corner lot; fireplace in second parlor or sitting room, formal dining room, two car garage, 3-4 bedrooms. \$120,000: call Jean Nead, Richwine Co., 761-9766.



On the West Side . . .

First to be complimented is the **Presbyterian Church** for the perpetual care given its treasured monument, the church building itself. Painters were recently seen at work on the towers and carpenters spotted at the back working on the eaves, replacing (with pristine accuracy) rotted wood.

The Methodist Church, too, deserves a special note of praise for all its work on the front doors and the grounds, where an enormous planting of impatiens and other flowers brighten the summer landscape. This year is the building's 100th anniversary, cause enough for celebration!

Of course, if we're looking for gardens, nothing could be more impressive than the sweep up **North Huron Street** itself, especially those three adjacent properties belonging to **Cheryl Farmer, the Museum, and Chuck Soule and his partner, Karl Andrews**. It's our best example of how one neighbor can influence others: Soule started the "Petunia Avenue" look; now Farmer is influencing those around her to shine--and what a display they have! Thanks to all, and ever thanks!

The word is that **Councilman Barry LaRue** has done a tour of the Romaine Management properties with **Loren Romaine** and suggested (with Victorian paint color books in hand) color schemes for houses under his control. You may wish to note buildings with the "Romaine" stamp upon them.

Don't, don't, don't miss **Joe Lawrence's gem** at the SW corner of **Perrin and Emmet**, now joyously asserting itself in muted rose and cream. What a transformation on that corner!

Do note the progress and the loving care given the two adjacent properties on the **NW corner of Pearl and Summit: 101 and 105**. (Both now boast picket fences!)

At **35 South Summit**, there's a new upper rail to match the historic rail on the famous porch below. (They say the porch came from the Chicago World's Fair of 1893--correct?)

And while we don't usually go beyond Summit in our "recognitions," sooner or later we have to say that there's a whole lot of the West Side that shouldn't be missed. **Pleasant Drive**, for example: Are there those who haven't discovered it? Well, go to 35 S. Summit and turn west. Note, in that special neighborhood, the neatness of **919**, for example: simply lawn and shrubs, clipped to perfection. Again, the home of **Board Member, Penny Schreiber** and her family at **922**, the pretty (and spacious) gardens on all sides of that Colonial. And, for flowers, especially, **915 and 913**. Take a drive--and enjoy!

And speaking of neighborhood associations, we must also mention the **Normal Park Neighborhood Association**, a group of people dedicated to preserving the quality of their neighborhood, the area bounded by **Congress, Summit, Cross, and Mansfield**. You may have noticed the signs at the four corners where these streets meet, informing visitors that they are entering the Normal Park Neighborhood. These signs were made possible by the Heritage Foundation's matching fund grant program. The NPNA is doing its best to restore **Recreation Park**, improving conditions there and increasing its use by neighbors. Also in the works is the **Greenscape** program, which entails planting bulbs and other perennials in the boulevard along Wallace and other common areas, as residents of Westmoorland currently do. We look forward to seeing the results next summer. There are many other lovely gardens in the area, such as the vibrant pink impatiens in front of **Carolyn and John Weins'** house at **931 Pearl**; the dozens of rosebushes, impatiens, and black-eyed Susans always in evidence at the northwest corner of **Wallace and Westmoorland**; the boxes of colorful zinnias surrounded by white sweet alyssum at **1101 Pearl**, and the masses of impatiens, nicotina, and tall pink daisies in the side yard of **Debbie and Matt Wagner** at **100 N. Wallace**. Also, keep an eye on the front yard of **1215 Sherman**, where homeowners are undertaking what looks to be a complex landscaping project. Throughout the whole Normal Park area, so many gardens, planters and boxes dot the landscape that it's impossible to list them all. We would also like to acknowledge the maintenance of a few homes in the neighborhood, such as the great new paint job on the front of the **Haushalters'** at **1124 Pearl**, the improved front porch, railing, new wooden door and brick walkway at **907 Grant**, and the always spotless and nicely landscaped historic structure at **96 Oakwood**. Your neighbors do appreciate your work, and **everyone's** efforts, to keep this area as lovely as it is.

At the other extreme, don't ignore the disaster at 184-190 N. Washington. And, for heaven's sake, don't give up on it. There is strong hope that it will yet be restored, and only the necessary legal processes are holding back visible progress at the moment. Presumably, the new owner would restore the roof line to the original, though the garages may have to be lost to parking. Stay tuned, impatient public and Go for it, City! We want that pivotal building saved--one more phoenix from the ashes for Ypsilanti!

Nearby, note the entirely new paving on Adams, from Michigan Avenue to Cross, done in record time!

GREAT APARTMENT FOR RENT: 2 bedroom upper flat in historic Queen Anne, off street parking, yard, near Depot Town on North Adams. \$450 plus utilities; \$550 for two. Bay window. Please call Connie, 665-2985.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DIANA SEPAC, E.M.U. GRADUATE STUDENT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND STAFF PERSON FOR THE YPSILANTI HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION FOR WINNING THE YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARD FOR 1992!



THANKS TO NANCIE AND DON LOFFNOW FOR GIVING FOUNDATION MEMBERS SUCH AN UNFORGETTABLE CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY THIS PAST YEAR, 1991!! We all thank you!

HISTORIC STRUCTURE MARKER AWARDS 1992

YOU MIGHT ENJOY DRIVING BY THESE PROPERTIES, JUST TO SEE THE CHOICES MADE THIS YEAR BY THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION IN AWARDING PROPERTY OWNERS FOR THEIR MAINTENANCE, RESTORATION, &/or RENOVATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES.

220 South Huron (Sandy and Gerald Hoag); 109 South Huron (Louis and Jane Rome); 416 East Cross (Rebecca Lewis); 310 Maple (Brad and Pamela Clark); 410 Oak (Warren Lewis); 325 East Cross (Peter Cousins and Sharryl Sullivan); 138 Hawkins (Mark and Laurie Feldkamp).

AND DON'T FORGET TO BUY AT LEAST ONE 1992 FOUNDATION CALENDAR, ON SALE AT FESTIVAL BOOTHS AND AFTER FESTIVAL THROUGH THE FOUNDATION. REMEMBER, TOO: THEY'RE EXCELLENT FOR GIFTS: RELATIVES FAR AWAY, OLD FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, THE MAILMAN, THE KIDS' TEACHERS. THEY'LL LOVE YOU FOR IT!

Heritage News

Heritage News is the newsletter of the YPSILANTI HERITAGE FOUNDATION. It is published five times a year: September, November, January, March and May; and distributed, free of charge, to the membership by mail, and made available to the public at City Hall, Farmers' Market, and various business locations in the three business districts in the City.

September 1992

Ypsilanti, MI

MEETING: Tuesday, September 29, 1992

LOCATION: The First Methodist Church
The Meeting Room (downstairs)
209 Washtenaw Avenue, Ypsilanti

**PROGRAM: "Converting Publicly Owned Buildings
into Private Spaces: Two Test Cases
from Ypsilanti and Manchester"**

SPEAKER: Lis Knibbe, Architect

WANT A FUN--AS WELL AS INFORMATIVE--MEETING for perhaps your first outing of the social season? We think we have it for you. Lis Knibbe, who has put her stamp on many projects around Ypsilanti, including the Downtown, will discuss two major restoration-renovation projects she completed, converting publicly owned buildings into private spaces:

A. The Gilbert Mansion, Ypsilanti

B. The Black Sheep Theatre Building, Manchester

This will be a revised version of a talk (with slides) that she gave in Lansing last November for a conference celebrating the completion of the restoration of the State Capitol building. This is her specialty: converting public buildings for residential use. She will outline for us:

1. the process of getting property out of the public domain and into private developers' hands
2. the analysis of the building's potential
3. the planning of new spaces
4. the "before" and "after" images (She has some astonishing slides for both properties)
5. the history of the two buildings, briefly outlined

**COME AND BE ENTERTAINED, INFORMED, AND EXCITED BY IDEAS
AT THE HEART OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION! REFRESHMENTS WILL
BE SERVED. SEE YOU THERE! MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED!
EVERYONE WELCOME! BRING A FRIEND!**



DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AND MARKETING PLAN COMING SOON

Last year at this time, Heritage News welcomed **Lori Ward** as our new director of the **Mainstreet Program** that has made so much difference in our downtown. This year, in the wake of a series of bad Press headlines (e.g., "Poll: Many in Ypsi shun downtown"--as if that were news to anyone interested!), we learn from Lori that a major study done by the firm of Hyett-Palma of Washington, D.C., will be published about the end of September. Hyett-Palma is a well-known retail marketing consulting firm. They have drawn up a retail and marketing plan, after lengthy and detailed study (from which the above headline was isolated) that attempts to identify what types of retail businesses to go after for downtown and to lay out a plan to relocate and cluster such businesses so they will help one another. They will also suggest strategies for recruiting new businesses, business maintenance, physical improvements, advertising and marketing. She notes that the study will press for more student-oriented businesses, since such a large percentage of our present foot traffic downtown is made up of students. At the same time, we need to toot our wonderful resources, such as historic buildings, the Huron River, and an ever-expanding park system.

TWO POSITIVE NEWS REPORTS ABOUT YPSILANTI are to be found (1) in The August 24 issue of The Detroit News and (2) in Crains Detroit, August 10-16, Connie Crump, editor, who often gives us wonderful coverage. Both are available at the Mainstreet office, 30 N. Washington (482-1412), and probably at the Public Library.

LET'S ALL RESOLVE TO SUPPORT OUR HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM WITH GREATER VIGOR THIS YEAR. This is one of the most perfect house museums in the state. We should be proud of it. We should promote it. We should take our friends and visitors from other towns and countries there. **DO RESOLVE . . .** (and just remember, if you can, what the neighborhood in that North Huron Street area looked like in the late '70s--and **REJOICE!**)





YHF ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR AGAIN ON THE MARKET

DON'T BE SURPRISED if a member of the Foundation calls you to ask if you are interested in buying a 1993 Engagement Calendar--twelve superb photographs of historic houses in Ypsilanti, with a useful calendar thrown in. The price is right at \$5.00, and it makes a splendid gift for friends, relatives, the mailman, kids' teachers, you name it. Calendars can be found soon at several local establishments or call Penny Schreiber at 483-5688. Do it now!

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that back copies of the Heritage News can be found in at least three different libraries? **The Ypsilanti Historical Museum** (482-4990), the **Archives of Eastern Michigan University's Library**, and the **Michigan Historical Library** on the North Campus of the University of Michigan (764-3482). All three collections have a great deal of material relating to Ypsilanti history. Hours vary for each place, so be sure to call in advance. For example, Archives at Eastern is open only from 8 until 12, Monday through Friday, Maria Davis, specialist in charge. Her direct number is 487-3423. Incidentally, she has not only Heritage News on file, but has cataloged (Spec. Coll. F. 574. Y8. Y8x) our Engagement Calendars, with an orderly listing of the specific houses shown in each calendar, making it possible for a patron simply to check the envelope file for each calendar to see if a house of interest is to be found within. Foundation members: we're making history!

MEMBERS: DID YOU PICK UP THE AUGUST 1992 "GOOD NEWS EDITION," OF HERITAGE NEWS, REPORTING MANY OF THE GOOD THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED REGARDING NEIGHBORHOODS AND PRESERVATION IN THE PAST YEAR? We believe that most members did--at Festival or specifically on Home Tour. **IF YOU AS A MEMBER DID NOT RECEIVE THAT ISSUE, AND WOULD LIKE A COPY,** call your editor, Jack Harris, at 485-2155, and we will gladly send you one. On the other hand, if you **ARE** coming to the September meeting, we will be sure to have one waiting for you there. (Postage is expensive, as you know!)



