

Heritage NEWS

MARCH 2009

General Meeting

Wednesday,

March 25, 2009

at 7:30 p.m.

Ladies' Literary Club

218 N. Washington St. • Ypsilanti



Origin of Design:

The Story of a Garden

John Cullen of Dexter's Celtic Gardens & Celtic Garden Imports

dens to the natural surroundings."

Cullen also admits to being a "design-oriented gardener and not a plantsman." He experienced the architectural bones of European gardens during winter trips and says that the bare trees and sleeping perennials influenced him as a designer. "Our trademark has become the hardscape," he says.

The Irish countryside is Cullen's primary muse. "There exists in Ireland a frugal splendor that is unparalleled around the world," he writes on Celtic Gardens' Web site. "Its ancient monastic communities, with their ecclesiastical remnants, are my greatest source of inspiration."

Celtic Gardens is a design-construction firm and Celtic Garden Imports sells antique garden ornaments and stone, mostly from Europe. Celtic Gardens is described on its Web site as being known for its "dedication to detailed design, quality plant and building materials, superior installation, and garden perpetuation."

In 2007 Celtic Gardens won Best in Show and the Daily People's Choice Award at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

We are lucky to live in the same county with this exciting gardener, whose goal is to become the best gardener in America, and his businesses.

Please join us on March 25. The public is welcome and refreshments will be served. For more information, call Penny Schreiber at (734) 483-5688.



The Rose of Glendalough - 2008 Singapore Garden Show
DESIGNER - JOHN CULLEN
COLLABORATING PARTNER - WIDE PRIDE FLOWER GARDENS PTE LTD

On Wednesday March 25, at 7:30 p.m., John Cullen, owner of Dexter's Celtic Gardens and Celtic Garden Imports, will speak on *Origin of Design: The Story of a Garden* to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 North Washington Street. Cullen's talk and Power Point presentation will focus on the stone-chapel garden he replicated for last year's Singapore Garden Show, where he represented the United States.

Cullen grew up in Detroit and Grosse Ile, where he was inspired by Watercroft Gardens, which is part of a Michigan Centennial Farm. He majored in literature at

the University of Michigan, working as a gardener to pay his tuition. He is self-taught, although he studied stonework in Ireland at County Heath's famed Cornerstone School of Stone Building and Restoration. Cullen also learned his craft by working with well-known garden designers.

Cullen's philosophy of gardening is "God makes, man shapes." He believes that "the heart of gardening is a collaborative effort," and says, "I try to weave together both nature and inspiration until I feel the desired effect has been achieved." Cullen describes himself as a "period gardener who strives to marry the formal, man-made gar-

Three Community Groups Preserving the History of Ypsilanti

Ypsilanti has always been a town strongly interested in its history. It is not surprising, that there are several history-related organizations functioning in the community.



Ypsilanti Historical Society is a membership organization, open to all interested persons. The Society's focus is on Ypsilanti 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 was fortunate, for some time, to have had a City Historian. In the 1950s, Ypsilanti City Council created the position of City Historian, a position which was filled first by Louis White, then by Foster Fletcher, then by Doris Milliman, and then by James Mann. The City Historian had the duty to collect and preserve items of historical interest to the Ypsilanti area. The Historical Museum collections were first housed in the old Quirk mansion at 206 North Huron, later moved to the basement

of the building on Michigan Avenue which is now the downtown branch of the Ypsilanti District Library and, in 1970, moved into the City-owned historic house at 220 North Huron Street. In 2007, the Historical Society bought the building from the City. The Archives, located in the lower level of the Museum, is 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.

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

is also a membership organization, open to all interested persons. Its focus is on Ypsilanti history in terms of buildings - in other words, historic preservation. The Foundation was formed in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historic structures in Ypsilanti by educating the community to the beauty and continued use of Ypsilanti's rich variety

Three separate community groups are associated with the history of Ypsilanti: the **Ypsilanti Historical Society**, the

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, and the **Ypsilanti Historic District Commission**.

Perhaps the following will help clear up the confusion which often exists about the nature of these groups and what role each plays in our community.

of the building on Michigan Avenue which is now the downtown branch of the Ypsilanti District Library and, in 1970, moved into the City-owned historic house at 220 North Huron Street. In

of such buildings. The Foundation is responsible for the "Historic Structure" markers on many of our buildings and for bi-monthly educational programs concerning historic preservation. The Foundation's major fund raiser is the annual Historic Home Tour, held during Heritage Festival each August.

Historic District Commission

is a City administrative agency, created by City Council in 1978 to administer the Historic District Ordinance. The Commission is composed of seven members, appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of City Council. The Commission meets twice a month to review all applications for building permits in the Historic District for work which will have an exterior effect. Work cannot begin until it has been approved by the Commission. All Commission members must be residents of Ypsilanti. The majority of them reside in the Historic District.

...

Each of these history-related organizations makes unique and significant contributions to the preservation of Ypsilanti history. Together, their work assures that our past will always be part of our future.

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Supports Local Projects from Home Tour Proceeds

Last fall, the YHF spent just under \$10,000 to support the renovation of the Freighthouse and the installation of the historic Hill Auditorium box office at the Riverside Arts Center. The foundation provided a match for a Certified Local Government grant for the Freighthouse and also donated the proceeds from its August home tour to be set aside for an eventual rain-garden installation at the Freighthouse. The money for the RAC box office was given in support of a grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs.



Riverside Arts Center Box Office Complete

On Thursday, February 12th, 2009 the Riverside Arts Center dedicated its new elevator and stair connector as well as the newly expanded theatre lobby. A main feature of the new lobby is the beautifully restored box office window from the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium. The restoration of the ticket window was accomplished through a donation of \$2,500 from the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation.

The window was part of Hill Auditorium, designed by famed Detroit architect Albert Kahn, that originally opened in 1913. Between 2002 and 2004, Hill underwent a \$40 million restoration and relocated its box office from the front of the building to a new addition on the west facade. As a result, The Christman Company, arranged to give the original box office to Barry LaRue. LaRue, current President of the Riverside Arts Center and board member of the YHF, had visions of reinstalling the historic ticket window. The materials were stored at the Arts Center until the lobby restoration began in December of 2008.

The windows saw the ticket buying public transact business for 80 years and will now serve a similar purpose in downtown Ypsilanti. We encourage all of our friends to patronize Riverside and to take a good look at this "new" artifact in our midst. Suffice it to say, the Riverside Arts Center supporters are excited about the future and grateful to the agencies, foundations and friends who have contributed to the success of the Riverside Arts Center!



The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Heritage News

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

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Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber
Andrea Webber

See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 pm

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.



The Annual YHF
Marker Award Banquet
will take place on
May 20th

Historic House Markers

Nominate a home or building for this special award

You can nominate a home or building for this special award.

Here are the criteria used by the committee:

- The building is within the boundaries of the City of Ypsilanti.
- The building predates 1950 and has an identifiable architectural style.
- The building is well and appropriately maintained (maybe it has just been rehabilitated).
- The grounds are maintained.
- If it is a rental property, the property has had appropriate maintenance for at least two years.
- The building has been developed sensitively.

One-of-a-kind markers are possible in order to recognize the preservation and stabilization of a significant or high-profile building that has had a history of mistreatment. These will be selected after a case-by-case review.

If you would like to nominate a building for a Historic Marker designation send (before April 1, 2009) a very brief description of the building and its address to:

Don Randazzo
Chair, YHF Marker Committee
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
e-mail: drandazzo@provide.net

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:

Joe Mattimoe, YHF Treasurer
301 N. Grove, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

- ☐ Students & Seniors \$5
☐ Individual \$10
☐ Family \$15
☐ Contributing \$25
☐ Supporting \$50
☐ Sustaining \$100
☐ Lifetime \$1,000

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Heritage NEWS



AUG./SEPT. 2009

Good News Edition

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation
2009 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!



Historic *Home Tour*

Sunday, August 23 noon – 5pm

*T*he 32nd Annual Historic Home Tour will take place on Sunday, August 23rd from noon - 5pm. Advance tickets are on sale in Ypsilanti at Haab's Restaurant, Norton-Durant Florists & Gifts, and Salt City Antiques, Nelson Amos Gallery, and Bowerbird Mongo they are also available in Ann Arbor

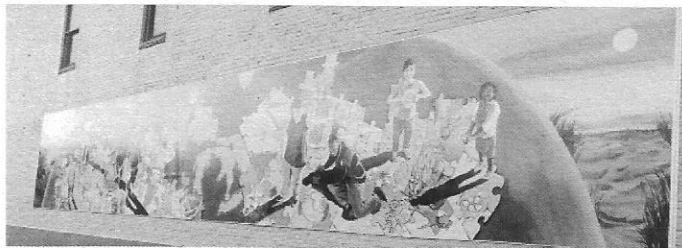
at Downtown Home & Garden. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and \$12.00 the day of the tour. On the day of the tour, tickets are available at the Home Tour ticket booth in front of the Historical Museum at 208 North Huron Street from 10 a.m. until 3 pm and Haab's on Michigan Avenue.

Good News in Ypsilanti

In Prospect Park on the East Side, enthusiastic and hardworking volunteers from the nearby neighborhood associations have revitalized historic **LUNA LAKE** and will continue to make improvements this fall and next spring. That lovely feature of the park is once again an asset to the community.



At the **CORNER HEALTH CENTER**, 47 North Huron, a wonderful mural on the south wall, professionally designed and painted by high school students, is highly visible to everyone traveling Huron. The Corner Health Center has acquired the adjacent building at 57 North Huron and is rehabbing that storefront as well.



The Detroit News published a great article on **YPSILANTI ARCHITECTURE**. <http://apps.detnews.com/apps/blogs/architectureblog/index.php?blogid=1228>

We hope it's still accessible when this newsletter comes out.



The historic commercial building at **12 WEST MICHIGAN** has been converted to residential use and is on this year's HOME TOUR! Nothing better for downtown than people living downtown.

The business incubator, **SPARK EAST**, is now located in the rehabbed historic building at 211-215 West Michigan in downtown Ypsilanti.



The newly renovated main floor of the **KRESGE BUILDING** at Washington and Michigan Avenue now features J.Neil's Mongolian Barbeque restaurant and the Keystone Underground Martini Bar.



At the **AUTOMOTIVE HERITAGE COLLECTION** a great new neon sign proclaims 'Auto Museum'.

New **INFORMATIONAL SIGNS** have been installed by Motor Cities and the National Park Service at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum, the Automotive Heritage Collection, the Bomber Restaurant, the Yankee Air Force, the Michigan Firehouse Museum, and Haab's Restaurant with financial assistance from the Heritage Foundation.

A major redevelopment has taken place at the old Central Elementary School (more recently Ave Maria) on West Forest at the corner of North Adams. **SCHOOLPICTURES.COM** is taking over vacant space, putting it back on the tax rolls, and planning green roofs on the two main buildings. The company is also buying the adjacent 1864 Italianate house at 314 West Forest to be used for meetings and to entertain potential clients.

A \$500,000 stimulus grant ensures that restoration of the historic **FREIGHTHOUSE** can be completed and that this wonderful space will once again serve the community. AND, the beginning of a rain garden has been constructed at the Freighthouse to absorb runoff from the roof and the entire site. Appropriate plantings will go in next spring.



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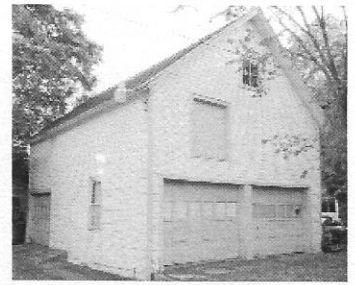
Outbuildings

Recognized for Historical Significance

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 our architectural history and to the historic character of Ypsilanti in a way no other buildings can.

In September of 2007, the Heritage Foundation began a new and ongoing program of awarding Historic Structure markers to those significant buildings.

Honored were the village barns and carriage houses at:



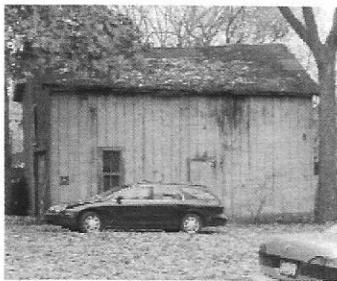
119 North Adams



112 S. Washington



215 S. Washington



106 S. Washington



213 E. Cross



215 E. Cross



309 W. Cross

2009 Marker Award Winners



204 Elm



518 Fairview



28 S. Prospect



120 N. Adams



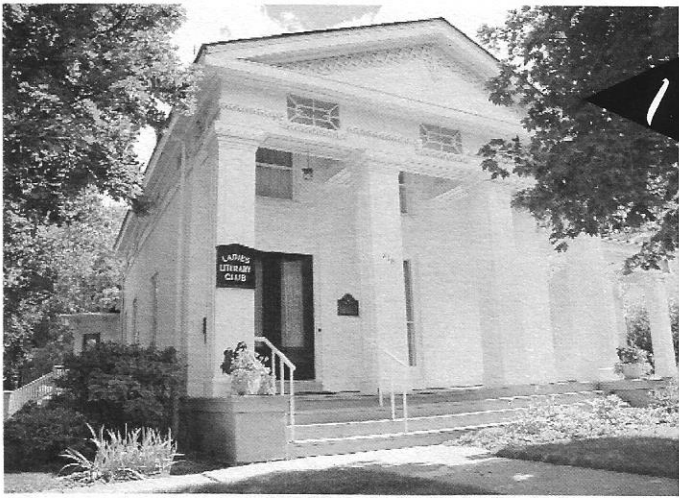
305 Oak



313 Maple

The awards were presented at the YHF Annual Marker Banquet, held at the Ladies' Literary Club on May 20, 2009.

2009 Historic Home Tour



218 North Washington Street

The Ladies' Literary Club

This wonderful 1842 Greek Revival house was thought by Emil Lorch, founder of the architecture program at the University of Michigan, to be one of the finest examples of its style in the country. In 1935, due to the efforts of Lorch, the house was selected by the Advisory Committee of the American Buildings Survey "because of its age and architectural interest as being worthy of most careful preservation for future generations." This document was deposited in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In 1965 the first marker on a historic house in Ypsilanti, bearing the Michigan State Historical Commission designation No. 47, was presented to the club; and on March 16, 1972, the club was notified that its house was now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The house was built by Arden Ballard. Several others owned it in quick succession but the Grant family, who purchased it in the 1850s, and the Ladies' Literary Club, which bought it in 1913 from Edward Grant, have been the chief stewards of the house.

The club itself, which was founded in 1878, has a rich history, much of it entwined with the story of the house. Over the years, the preservation of their clubhouse, which is in Ypsilanti's historic district, has been an important goal for club members to coalesce around. The house is used for all club meetings and events but it is also available for rent to the public. In 1970, after careful consultation with preservation architect Richard Frank, a large kitchen, caretaker's apartment, additional restrooms, and a basement for workshop activities and storage were added to the back of the house. To finance the addition, the ladies of the club spent money they had on hand, raised more, and secured a substantial mortgage, which they paid off in short order.

Those who have never been inside this architectural treasure will love touring its gracious rooms, hearing the history of the club and the house, and seeing the antiques donated over the years by club members.



120 North Adams Street

Judith Weinberger

The only Prairie-style house in Ypsilanti was built by Edward and Lena Mellencamp about 1912. The Mellencamps, who owned a store in the city, lived in the house until 1959, when their son, Robert, inherited it. In 1967 Robert sold the house to Vincent Buck, a former mayor of Ypsilanti. The Michigan Association for Retarded Children purchased the house in 1975 and converted it into a multi-unit dwelling for people with special needs. Judith Weinberger, the fourth and current owner, bought the house in 2001 and has spent several years enthusiastically restoring it.

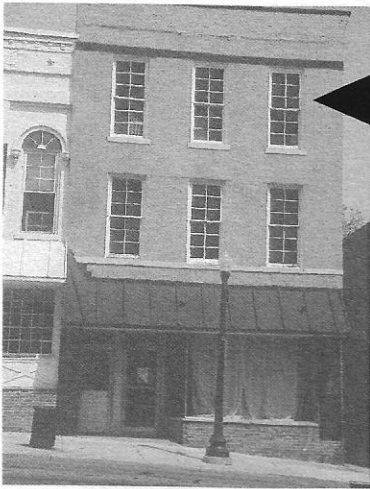
The house is a wonderful example of Prairie-style residential architecture, which originated in the early 1900s and is largely credited to renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The style is defined by strong horizontal lines, rows or pairs of windows, and low-pitched roofs with oversized eaves. Unlike Victorian architecture, Prairie-style lacks overt ornamentation and bright paint colors. The focus, instead, is on an overall sense of symmetry using geometric shapes and forms. Paint colors are muted and mimic those found in nature. Tourgoers will observe all of these elements when they visit the house. Be sure to notice the unique stucco soffits.

The interior of the house has an open, expansive floorplan, which is typical of the Prairie style. Weinberger has lovingly restored the original oak and pine floors, Arts and Crafts windows, and glass pocket doors. The Pewabic-tile fireplace in the front room and quarter-sawn oak paneling in the dining room are not to be missed. Although updated, the kitchen includes the original ice box and butler's pantry. The YHF is very excited to have this wonderful example of an important American architectural style on this year's historic home tour.

32nd Annual *Historic Home Tour*

Sunday, August 23rd from noon-5pm Tickets are \$10.00 in advance and \$12.00 the day of the tour.

2009 Historic Home Tour



12 West Michigan Avenue

Eric and Lisa Walters

This three-story building in downtown Ypsilanti is believed to have been built about 1860. Near the turn of the last century the address changed from 433 Congress to 12 West Congress. This has hampered efforts to research more precisely the date of the building.

In 2007 long-time Ypsilantians Lisa and Eric Walters startled their friends by deciding to buy 12 West Michigan. The couple set about renovating the upper two floors into a new home for themselves, doing almost all of the work themselves. They've been at it now for more than eighteen months.

The main floor was occupied by a slew of businesses and organizations over the years, among them Ypsilanti Plating Works (1912), Robbins Tinsmith (1922-1926), the Salvation Army (1934-1942), and most recently J. K. Shoe Repair (1981-1997). In 1948 the upper floors became the Hillside Hotel. No one can remember when the hotel officially went out of business, but the upstairs apartments continued to be rented until the Walterses bought the building.

Lisa and Eric have gutted all but the second-floor bathroom, which they chose to leave as architectural evidence of the hotel. Fourteen very small rooms have become five large ones. The kitchen was designed with a "diner" ambiance, featuring black and white tile, laminate countertops, and stainless steel appliances. The living room doubles as a library housing Lisa's extensive book collection. The third floor contains the master bedroom and bath, Eric's den, and Lisa's office.

Lisa explains that because the building is on Michigan Avenue, or US-12, she refers to it as "Twelve on Twelve." Eric points out that both the second and third floors have twelve windows, so that's "twelve on twelve" too.

The future of the retail space remains uncertain. It's currently rehearsal space for Fourth Wish, Eric's jazz quartet.



518 Fairview Circle

Erika Nelson

The 1925 Period Tudor at 518 Fairview Circle may have been the first house on the street. It is situated sideways on its lot—a very English way of placing a house. The main door doesn't face the street and entering the house feels like coming through a garden. The garage and driveway at the back are accessed off Oakwood Street. This delightful cottage-style house with soft gray decorative half-timbering shows itself off without parked cars cluttering the view.

Erika Nelson bought the house less than nine months ago, in December. Nelson and previous owners Linda Palka, Bruce and Cheryl Campbell, and Patrick Lutali have collectively spent over a decade renovating it. Palka started on the exterior with a new roof and gutters, and she repainted the house herself. Her biggest project took place in summer 2000. With the help of her dad she gutted the kitchen, opening up a wall between it and the dining room. The result is a spacious, light-filled room. Doors were removed from the sunroom off the living room, creating another expansive and airy space.

The Campbells added double-hung windows throughout the house, put in skylights, and enclosed the rear porch to make a sunroom. They also built a two-tiered deck and pergola behind the house. Lutali did a wonderful renovation of the second-story bathroom in tile and marble and he designed the extensive gardens and landscaping.

Nelson has put her own stamp on the house in the short time she has been there. Before moving in she began numerous renovation projects, including restoration of the original wood fire-place mantel and the addition of Motawi tile to the hearth and surround. And she replaced the kitchen backsplash with Motawi. Her art choices and Mission-style furniture create a strong statement in this charming and very personal home.

Advance tickets are on sale in Ypsilanti at Haab's Restaurant, Norton-Durant Florists & Gifts, Salt City Antiques, Nelson Amos Gallery and Bowerbird Mongo 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.

2009 Historic Home Tour



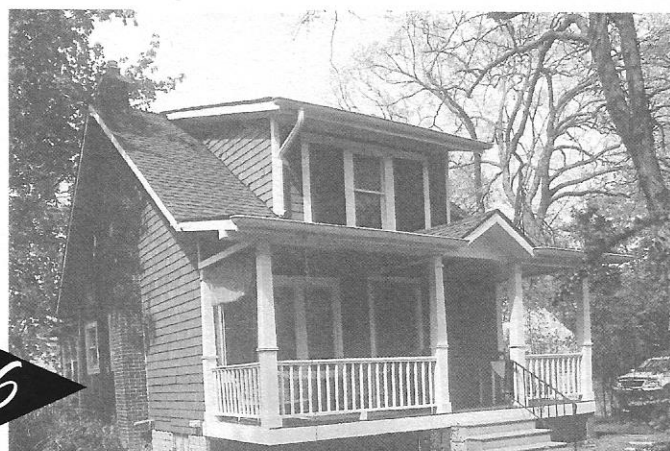
957 Sherman Street

Kathy Scharp and Jake Grimes

This meticulously decorated Tudor Revival was built in 1926 for Mary and Earl Willoughby, owner of Willoughby Bros. shoe store, well-known to Ypsilanti's long-time residents. It was later the home of a grocer, a salesman, and a brewmaster at Ypsilanti Brewing. In 1948 it was purchased by city manager Naseeb Domoose and in the late 1950s the house belonged to the director of Family Services, Joe Granata, soon followed by an Ypsilanti High School teacher (Mr. Schmidt, to those of you who attended in the 1960s). The present owners, Kathy Scharp and Jake Grimes, were drawn to the Tudor style, with its sharply pitched gables, small paned windows, and the half-timbered effect made by horizontal and vertical boards breaking the shingle siding into rectangles.

When Kathy and Jake bought the home in 1999, they brought incredible skills to its decorating. Jake is a master carpenter and builder and Kathy an inventive painter, and together they have created an ambiance of drama and comfort. Influenced by the art of John William Waterhouse, Jake built a fireplace that recalls the medieval hearth that might have been found in the wealthiest Tudor houses of the early twentieth century. He has installed elegant moldings throughout the house and Kathy has used paint to make faux finishes that unify the style and add interest to what was a rather modest dwelling. Many Waterhouse prints are on display as well as those of other painters of the period. Venetian masks, Tiffany-style lamps, both period and new, family antiques, and many other details also make this a special home.

Tourgoers will enjoy Kathy's extremely charming hanging pots and window-box plantings in the front, with the flower colors selected to complement the blue color of the house.



1104 Pearl Street

Lani Chisnell

Russell and Flora Clyne built this vernacular bungalow in 1924. Russell died in 1929 and Flora, who was a typing teacher at Roosevelt High, lived on in the house until 1960. Current owner Lani Chisnell has assembled a list of former owners. She enjoys pointing out that for most of its eighty-five years the house has been owned by single women.

Chisnell bought the house in late February 2004. When she first saw it, she was not impressed. "It was this strange house with a big long kitchen in it and no living area," she says. "I called it the bowling alley." But over four years she and her very handy dad collaborated on creating a spacious and livable main floor. The house has been transformed with what she calls "a nod toward the Arts and Crafts" style. Among the many highlights of the redo are an attractive new stairway and a stained-glass window on the landing that her dad made and installed. The first floor now has a dining room, a living room, and a wonderful new kitchen with a sitting area. On the second floor, the original small, oddly located bathroom was combined with a third bedroom and turned into a terrific large bathroom. Chisnell has furnished her home with garage sale and Treasure Mart finds, pieces picked up off the curb on garbage day, and antiques from the Saline Antiques Fair.

Over the last year Chisnell has been working on the house's exterior. Siding was removed to reveal cedar-shake shingles and the house has been beautifully repainted. She also added a front porch and an inspired new front door. Her front-yard perennial garden is eye-catching.

Coming up soon will be a decision about her dilapidated detached garage. Where some might see a demolition project, Chisnell envisions a garden shed, a carriage house, and a covered outdoor porch.

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:

Joe Mattimoe, YHF Treasurer • 301 N. Grove, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

☐ Students & Seniors \$5 ☐ Individual \$10 ☐ Family \$15

☐ Contributing \$25 ☐ Supporting \$50

☐ Sustaining \$100 ☐ Lifetime \$1,000

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

2009 Historic Home Tour



210 Wallace Boulevard

Larry and Michele Thomas

This tidy green-sided vernacular colonial revival, built in 1932, is the home of Larry and Michele Thomas, who have lived here for twenty years. The house has a hip roof, which makes it more modern for its time (a "pure" colonial revival would have a gable roof). The house used to be white, with a cupola on top and an odd enclosed porch on the front. In its current incarnation, the house immediately catches the eye of passers-by because of its simple but elegant hip-roofed portico, its cheerful and serene color, its red front door, and its lovingly tended front-yard perennial garden (which is a gem).

When tourgoers finish admiring the flowers in front and go inside, they will be reminded of days gone by when people somehow managed to happily raise kids in comfortable, gracious homes despite a lack of cathedral ceilings, one-acre kitchens, and rambling family rooms.

The Thomases have removed carpeting, refinished floors, and painted all the rooms in vivid colors. Family antiques abound. Notice the showy "painted" photos of Michele's great-grandparents at the top of the stair landing. A child's rocking chair in one of the bedrooms belonged to Larry's mom, who would be ninety-three if she were still alive. A handsome white cupboard with glass doors in another bedroom was a wedding gift from Michele's great-grandparents to her grandparents.

The kitchen was redone about thirteen years ago and the Thomases recently updated to granite countertops. The spacious upstairs bathroom, which has been remodeled to suit the era of the house, includes two windows, a separate shower, and the original claw-foot bathtub.

Tourgoers will exit into the backyard, which doesn't require much moving because the Thomases have replaced almost all of the grass with a patio and another delightful perennial garden.

P r e s e r v a t i o n
recycling on a grand scale!

Heritage Foundation Wins 1st Place in 4th of July Parade



Thanks to Barry LaRue, Beth Sandmaier, one of the scenic artists from the Power Center, and YHF Board Members, a new float was erected for the 4th of July parade, depicting the Ypsilanti Underwear factory. With Barry and Beth's artistic talents the post-card images from the factory were brought to life for everyone to enjoy. This float is one for the books!

Heritage Foundation Contributes to Many Historic Community Preservation Projects

The Heritage Foundation is pleased to be able to contribute funds to aid other local organizations in their historic preservation efforts. Here are some of the projects that we have contributed to since 1998.

- Riverside Arts Center for installation of the historic Hill Auditorium box office window,
- Historic District Commission for interns,
- Kempf House,
- Towner House,
- Historic District street signs,
- Clothesline Project,
- John Pierce plaque,
- Washtenaw County Historical Society brochure,
- Ypsilanti Auto Heritage Museum,
- Ypsilanti Auto Heritage Foundation,
- Yankee Air Museum Recovery Fund,
- Bentley Historical Library,
- Ypsilanti Historical Society,
- Highland Cemetery National Register of Historic Places nomination,
- Friends of Ypsilanti Freighthouse,
- City of Ypsilanti for Riverside Park,
- City of Ypsilanti for survey work by EMU historic preservation students,
- Michigan Historic Preservation Network,
- Health Walk publicity,
- Motor Cities/National Park Service for wayside signs.

Good News in Ypsilanti

The **DEPOT TOWN SIGNAL TOWER** has a fresh coat of paint in its original colors, as well as a new roof and refurbished siding.

Improvements just follow one after the other at **RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER!** The new

stair/elevator tower which links the Riverside and the old Detroit Edison bldg (now known as the Riverside Off Center), is now complete. Also the original Edison garage doors, which were removed sometime in the past, have been replicated by restoration carpenter extraordinaire Don Randazzo.

So, despite the weak economy and drastically reduced City staff, good things have been happening - we are grate-



ful. Thanks to everyone who works to make Ypsilanti a better place to live. Police Fire fighters, City Manager, City Department Heads, City Employees, Mayor and City Council, Boards & Commissions. They're a great bunch doing a great job in hard times. Thanks to everyone who has tucked flowers into window boxes, hanging baskets, and little nooks and crannies all over town - little things make a BIG difference! 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!

Museums— Don't miss these treasures!

Antique Fire Equipment Museum

W. Cross Street between Huron and Washington

Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum

E. Cross at North River

Historical Museum

on N. Huron just south of Cross

Yankee Air Museum

Willow Run Airport

Have you visited the YHF website lately? There are new features you may find interesting • www.yhf.org

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See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 7:30 pm

26	MAY	Annual Marker Awards Banquet
24	MARCH	Garden Program TBA
27	JANUARY	Creating Green Architecture Michael Klement, A.L.A.
18	NOVEMBER	Energy Systems & Historic Buildings Brenda Kigdon, Historical Architect
23	SEPTEMBER	Rehab of the Freighthouse & the Rain Garden Concept Bonnie Penel

Meetings are held at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 N. Washington Street, Ypsilanti at 7:30pm. The public is welcome.

2009/2010 SCHEDULE

Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

Hank Prebys, President
Joe Mattimoe, Treasurer
Jan Arps-Prundeanu
Lani Chisnell
Pattie Harrington
Barry LaRue
Bill Nickels
Bonnie Penel
Alex Pettit
Claudia Pettit
Don Randazzo
Jane Schmiedeke
Penny Schreiber

Heritage News
The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

c/o Don Randazzo
6101 Hitchingham Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197



Heritage NEWS

NOVEMBER 2009

General Meeting
Wednesday,
November 18, 2009
at 7:30 p.m.
Ladies' Literary Club
218 N. Washington St. • Ypsilanti

EMU's Historic Preservation Program, a Graduate's Point of View

Veronica Robinson, a student in EMU's nationally renowned historic preservation graduate program, has been an intern at the Ypsilanti Historical Museum since May 2008. On Wednesday, November 18, at 7:30 p.m., Robinson will speak to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation about her two and a half years studying preservation at EMU and her experiences as an intern at the museum. Her talk will take place at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 North Washington Street, and it will focus on why she chose the program and the real-world experiences it has offered her.

Robinson grew up in Midland and came to the area to study at the University of Michigan, where she graduated in 2006 with a major in history and a minor in art history. Her plan was "to go into museums," and she applied around the country to museum studies and historic preservation graduate programs. When she discovered the nearby program at EMU, Robinson realized she could attend a top program and save a lot of money by paying in-state tuition.

Robinson is most interested in artifacts and the built world and how they represent tangible history. EMU offers a large selection of courses, many of which are architecturally based. She says that program head Ted Ligibel and his faculty are very well connected and, as a result, EMU preservation students can select from a wide variety of interesting projects. In addition, Robinson has been thrilled to intern at a "really neat small museum where I've gotten a lot of experience doing everything." At the museum she has done a little bit of everything, from creating a digital collections management system to leading tours to digging drainage ditches with Ypsilanti Historical Society president Al Rudisill. Museum volunteers consider Robinson one of the best interns they've ever worked with.

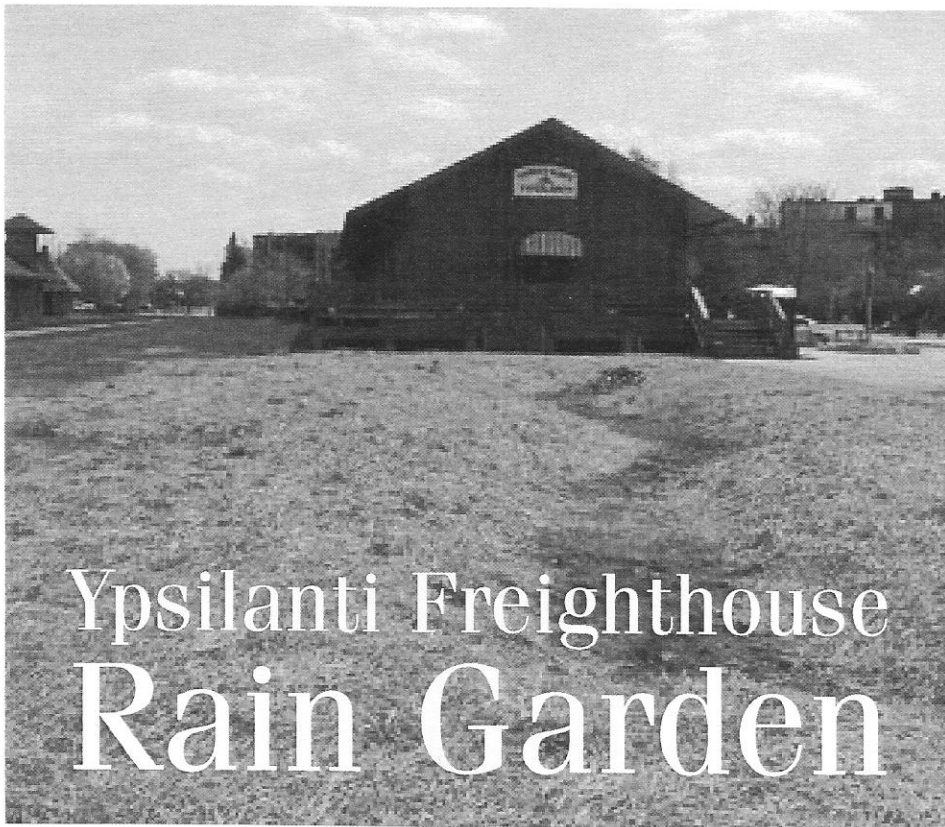


Robinson once had a dream museum job in mind, but after attending graduate school in preservation she's learned that there are "so many interesting jobs I could end up doing." She will graduate in December and is apply-

ing for a variety of jobs all over the country. Please join us on November 18. The public is welcome and, as always, refreshments will be served. For more information, call Penny Schreiber at (734) 483-5688.

EMU's Historic Preservation Program Largest in the Country

The EMU historic preservation program is housed in the Department of Geography and Geology, but other participating departments include history, art, and construction technology. Founded in 1979, the master's program is now one of the largest and most comprehensive in the country, with concentrations in preservation planning, historic administration, and heritage interpretation and tourism. The program has been recognized with several awards over its thirty-year history, including the American Association of State and Local History's coveted Certificate of Commendation for ten years of nationally recognized performance within the field of historic preservation education. The award program is the nation's most prestigious competition for local history achievement.



Ypsilanti Freighthouse Rain Garden

- An Interview with Greg Marker
By Bonnie Penet

Bonnie: I seem to remember three questions our Board asked when we presented the idea and the budget for a rain garden. "What's a rain garden?" "Is there some law?" And "Can we re-open the Freighthouse without it?"

Greg: Well, a rain garden is more than a pretty name. A rain garden is a carefully designed and constructed drainage system that captures at least the first half to a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch of rain, the so-called first flush that comes off any structures on a particular site. Each garden is constructed in layers of various sand, clay and soil mixes no more than 6" thick to encourage the water to percolate quickly into the soil, rather than stand and create mosquitoes, or flood a street and carry pollutants into the storm drains, streams and river.

Bonnie: So, the water stays on the property.

Greg: The water and any dust, dirt, debris and pollutants in the area. The water is

filtered naturally over time, say, 24 to 48 hours. Plantings are also carefully chosen and usually include deep-rooted perennials and native species to help filter pollutants. Native succulents are used for variety and color. Not only can these plants survive in standing water for a couple days, but their long roots help make them drought-tolerant.

Keeping the first flush on the property is especially important at the Freighthouse,



(left to right) Denise Slone, Mike Bodary, Brian Robb, Pam Byrnes, Pete Murdock, Nat Edmunds, Bonnie Penet, Ed Penet, Janice Bobrin, Mayor Paul Schreiber, Bob Slone, Greg Marker

since soil testing revealed the presence of heavy metals from the railroad days. Removal of the soil would have been too expensive, so the serpentine berm design was created using existing soils, adding a clay/soil mix, then capping with a top soil and mulch mix.

Bonnie: And it's seeded with grass for now.

Greg: The tops of the berms were seeded with perennial rye. And the interior was seeded with an annual rye that will be mulched and replanted in the spring of 2010.

Bonnie: Back to those earlier questions ... is there really a law that mandates rain gardens?

Greg: Simply, environmental quality laws require any new construction to control a 100-year flood event by restricting the release of that water from the property to the same rate as a forest would release that water, about 0.15 cubic feet per second. You can dam it up, dig a deep containment cistern, or build a rain garden and let it naturally percolate.

The FOYF grant from SHPO for storm water management did not technically fall into the new construction category. And the total site is .97 of an acre, just under the one acre threshold. However, both the FOYF and the City wanted the storm water management project to be a model for other renovation in the community. It was the right thing to do.

Bonnie: I can answer the third question. The SHPO grant with local matching funds covered re-sloping the east and north decks, and the grade below the decks, plus new fascia, gutters, downspouts and drain piping out to the rain garden, but not the rain garden itself. Once we committed to the project, the SHPO grant required us to complete the rain garden at our expense to get their final sign-off and for the City to be reimbursed.

Greg: By doing the design and construction ourselves, the FOYF saved an estimated \$40,000, minus the cost of the concrete removal and about \$2,500 in materials and equipment rental. Berming the sides and not hauling away the polluted soil also saved additional tens of thousands of dollars.

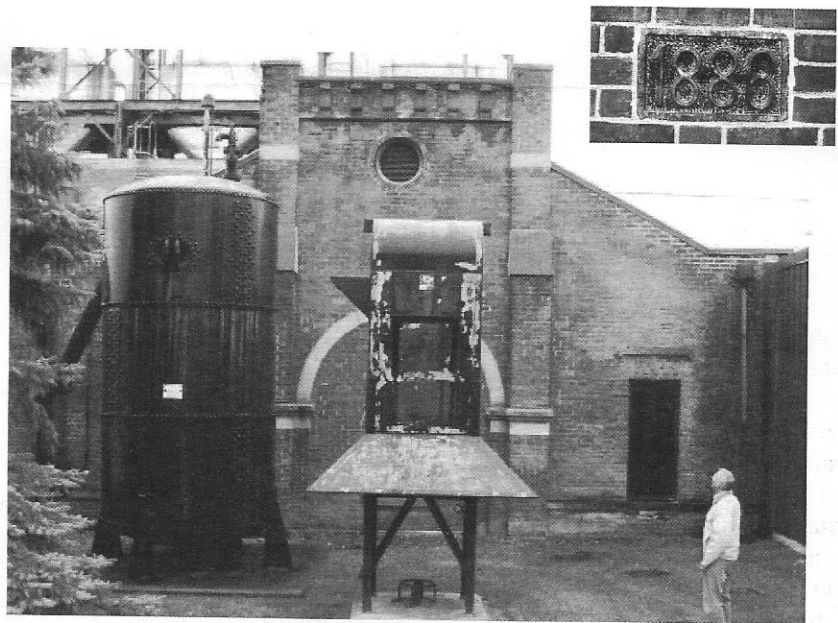
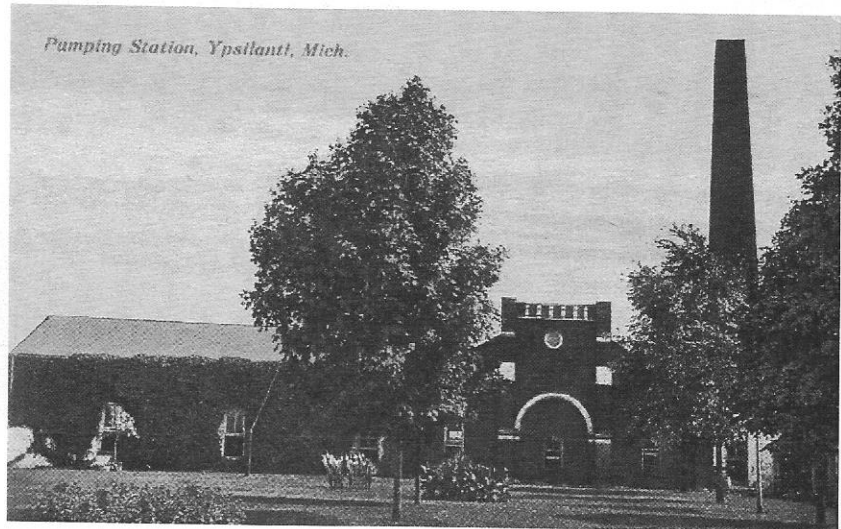
Doing the work ourselves also qualified us for the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commission's Rain Garden program. Any county property owner who does their own work can qualify for the first \$1,000 of professional landscape design, plant selection and planting plan. Further, the FOYF performed its own survey and shape to save design money for the planting plan and the plants. Because of the importance of the site given the future commuter train project, the WCWRC is creating two plans for consideration. We'll turn the soil this winter, and then plant in the spring.

Bonnie: Thanks, Greg, for the information. The FOYF is also grateful to the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation, the Ypsilanti DDA, the Ypsilanti Garden Club, the City of Ypsilanti, and other generous donors, plus John Foley, Craig Shankweiler, Greg Marker and other ambitious OHM and FOYF volunteers, who helped make the project happen.

- For more information on rain gardens and how you might build your own storm water management project, go to:
http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain_commissioner.

- For more information on the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, including monthly updates, go to: <http://www.fofy.org>

Ypsilanti Ford Plant Houses Historic Buildings



Bottom 2 photos were recently taken by Bill Nickels

The land that included our Ypsilanti Ford plant housed buildings titled "Pumping Station" on the above post card and "Water Works and Electric Light" on an Ypsilanti 1890 birds eye map. As the cornerstone indicates, the building construction dates from 1886. As pictured, the building with the Roman arch survived until this fall as part of the Ford plant power house. As part of a plan to improve the marketability of the complex, Ford will demolish the western half of the plant before January 1, 2010. We are losing some history in exchange for an opportunity for redevelopment of the site.



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Denis & Jane Schmiedeke

313 High St.

Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2912



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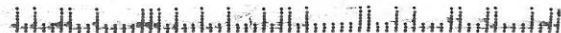
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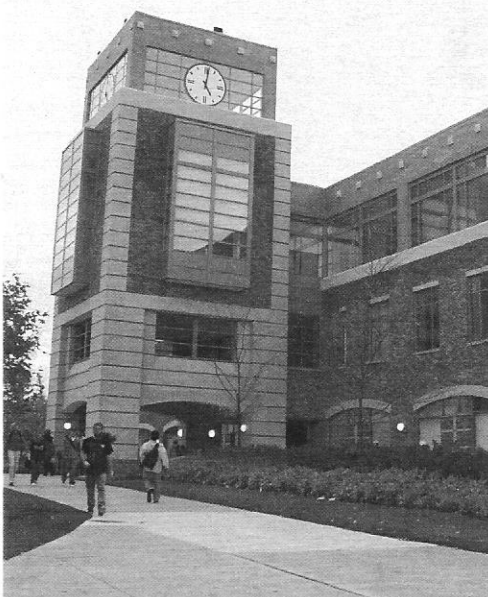
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YHF Archives housed in EMU Library

Quantities of archival materials related to 40 years of historic preservation activity in Ypsilanti have found a home. Having long languished in boxes here and there, they are now properly housed at the Eastern Michigan University Library in a newly established Historic Preservation collection. Included are two big boxes containing the entire paper history of the 20-year effort to save the Towner House, several binders

of Historic District Commission agendas and minutes, and 40 years of Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation records, including every calendar ever published and all 32 Home Tour brochures. These materials will now be available to all interested persons. EMU was pleased to receive them and YHF was glad to have them safely housed locally - a good arrangement for all concerned.



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:

Joe Mattimoe, YHF Treasurer
301 N. Grove, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

- ☐ Students & Seniors \$5
☐ Individual \$10
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