

# Heritage NEWS

NOVEMBER 2004



## Christmas Home Tour

Sunday Dec. 5th  
12:00 - 5:30 pm

benefiting Meals on Wheels

Advance Tickets - \$15

Ypsilanti - Mantis Garden Supply, Haab's  
Ypsilanti Visitors & Convention Bureau,  
Quinn's Essentials  
Ann Arbor - John Leidy Shop

Day of Tour Tickets - \$20

Available at Haab's & Mantis Garden Supply



DON WILL DISCUSS HOW TO EVALUATE  
THE STRUCTURAL CONDITION  
OF A HISTORIC HOUSE.

## Buying This OLD HOUSE

On Wednesday evening, November 17, 7:30, Don Randazzo will give a talk to the Heritage Foundation on "Buying This Old House." Don will discuss how to evaluate the structural condition of a historic house. He will show photos of new houses and historic houses to illustrate structural and mechanical warning signs and he will explain the positive signs to look for from the curb to the basement to the attic.

An Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation founding board member, Randazzo worked for ten years as a restoration carpenter at Greenfield Village. He has been inspecting houses for prospective home buyers for more than twenty years and is a past member of the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission.

Please join us on November 17 at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 North Washington Street, in Ypsilanti. The presentation is open to the public. As always, refreshments will be served.



# Historic Home Experience:

**Mark and Julie Fisher**  
402 East Cross

*(First in a series of testimonials  
from historic home owners in Ypsilanti.)*

In 1994, we moved from Virginia to Ypsilanti. We purchased an Italianate in Ypsilanti's historic district with the grand plan of changing it from a duplex back to a single-family home. The house had two of each appliance, and less than half of them worked. Our first project was to remove the appliances and the empty liquor bottles from the backyard.

## 1996:

The house is finally to the point where we don't sneak in and out. We had the exterior painted (the neighbors didn't find the peeling paint as charming as it seemed two years ago), a screened-in porch and gutters installed, and some landscaping done. Julie insists that all she did this year was write checks to grubbily dressed men who came to the door—she hopes that they all worked on the house.

## 1997:

The outside of the house is finally finished, and we received a historic marker. We were surprised they didn't ask us to keep our shades down, as we were in the throes of a major kitchen renovation. Mark had to raise the floor, raise the ceiling, and move the plumbing—and then still had to put in the cabinets and countertops. We hope the cooking materials are back in place before Christmas or our holiday feast will be delivered pizza! The visiting nurse who came to check on daughter Hannah brought a list of things to make the house safer; you could see her eyes shifting to the exposed 2 x 4s and wires as she read the list.

## 1998:

Mark is still waging the Battle of the House, and the house is still winning! This year, he spent a lot of time on landscaping, installing raised flower beds and brick walkways. He rented a jackhammer and soon had a testosterone club helping him. Every time Julie looked out the window, a different male neighbor was offering advice and testing the new tool.

## 1999:

Mark recently renovated an old playhouse that was given to us by a neighbor. It looks nicer than our house, and we're ready to move in, dogs and all. Mark has also finished our fence (it only took five years) and some walkways and landscaping. We are now ready to complete the inside of the house!

## 2000:

The house is really coming along, and next year we may be able to report that it is done! We finished the living room, master bedroom, and guest bedroom. If our energy levels cooperate, we may have the dining room and foyer done by the end of the year. Julie has had a yearlong "urge to purge," so she is getting rid of stuff by the trunk load. Mark is afraid to stay in one spot too long.

## 2001:

We are almost done with the house, with only the study to finish. Mark suddenly launched grand plans to raise the ceiling in the study and build a loft. Julie is considering hitting him with a 2 x 4. When the study is done, the final punch-out list will be almost two miles long.

## 2002:

We hope you are sitting down when you read this. The house is done!

Eight years and half the national debt later, we are finished. It was all worth it; at least that's our mantra. We were even invited to be on the home tour this summer, which made us feel a little like Sally Fields ("You like our house. You really like our house.") Now, since Mark doesn't know what to do with all of his spare time, we have decided to put on an addition . . .

# National Trust Nomination for Ypsilanti

The YHF has nominated Ypsilanti for the National Trust for Historic Preservation 2005 Dozen Distinctive Destinations. Each year the Trust selects twelve communities from across the country that offer enjoyable natural, historic, aesthetic, and cultural experiences. According to the Trust, winning communities must have a dynamic downtown, a commitment to historic preservation, interesting architecture, cultural diversity, locally owned businesses, and walking access for residents and visitors.

Recognizing that Ypsilanti is a perfect fit for this award, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has submitted a nomination for the city. A dozen winners will be selected this spring. The Trust's Dozen Distinctive Destinations will be publicized as destinations for travelers interested in heritage tourism. Ypsilanti is a particularly good candidate to become a Distinctive Destination with its museums and its large historic district. We'll let you know if Ypsilanti is selected.

## 2004/2005 SCHEDULE

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

**17**  
NOVEMBER **Buying This Old House**  
Don Randazzo & Paul Schreiber

**26**  
JANUARY **How To  
Research Your Home**

**23**  
MARCH **Painting  
Your Home**

**25**  
MAY **Annual Awards  
Banquet**

Have you visited the YHF website lately? There are new features you may find interesting • [www.yhf.org](http://www.yhf.org)  
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.

*See you at the General Meeting - Wednesday, November 17, 2004 at 7:30 pm*

### Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

- Hank Prebys, President
- Joe Mattheoe, Treasurer
- Jan Arps
- Jennifer Albam
- Jennifer Goulet
- Patlie Hamngton
- James Mann
- Bill Nickels
- Don Randazzo
- Jane Schmiedeke
- Paul Schreiber
- Penny Schreiber

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