

# Heritage NEWS

JANUARY 2006

## General Meeting

Wednesday,  
January 25, 2006  
at 7:30 p.m.

Ladies' Literary Club  
218 N. Washington Street  
Ypsilanti

## After the Fire



Ed and Bonnie Penet's 1850s Italianate house located on North Huron Street.

**O**n Wednesday evening, January 25, please join us at the Ladies' Literary Club, 218 North Washington Street, 7:30, for "After the Fire," an informative talk by Ypsilantians Bonnie and Ed Penet and Pam Hamblin about how to recover from a fire in a historic home.

In the middle of the night on November 13, 2000, Bonnie and Ed Penet woke to a devastating fire in their lovely 1850s Italianate house on North Huron Street. In 2002 Pam Hamblin was also awakened in the night by flames shooting up from the front porch of her east-side 1917 craftsman bungalow, where she had lived since 1989.

Hamblin and the Penets had similar experiences. They lost almost everything they owned to water, heat, and smoke damage. Bonnie and Ed first lived in a motel and then in a rented house in Ann Arbor until they could move back into their restored home two and a half years later. Pam lived in a motel for two and a half years, when her house was finally ready to be occupied again.

The Penets' presentation will include slides and they are going to explain the arduous process they went through to get to move-back-in day. Their story is partly about contractors and keeping them on schedule. They are also going to tell us what we can all do immediately to our historic building or home to prepare for or to avoid a fire.

Hamblin is going to talk about the nightmare of dealing with her insurance company. "Insurance companies are no longer your friend," according to Hamblin. She describes documenting everything she had for insurance purposes as "the most frustrating and emotionally and physically exhaust-

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ing” experience of her life. “Major fires don’t happen often,” says Hamblin, “but they happen unexpectedly and no one is ready.”

Bonnie, Ed, and Pam agree that in many ways they will never recover from the trauma of going through a house fire. “I don’t think I have any adrenaline left in my body,” laughs Ed, and he says that Bonnie still wakes up at 3 a.m. “The physical and emotional problems remain,” says Pam. “It will have always happened—it doesn’t go away.”

Fortunately, both of these stories have a happy ending. The Penets’ home was a major highlight of the Heritage Foundation’s Historic Home Tour in 2003. And Pam has the house she always wanted. With insurance money and “a bunch of my own money, I did everything I ever wanted to do to my house,” she says.

We look forward to seeing you on January 25. As always, refreshments will be served and the public is welcome.



Pam Hamblin’s east-side 1917 Craftsman bungalow.



## Ypsilanti in Budapest?

*The word “Ypsilanti” highlights a high-end store in an up-scale section of Budapest*

My carpool mate, Judy Endelman, presented this photo to me after her trip to Eastern Europe last year. While in Pest, a city on one side of the Danube that together with Buda on the other side makes up the Hungarian capitol, she was amazed to see the word “Ypsilanti” set in stone over the windows of a department store in an up-scale shopping area. She took the picture, if only to confirm my continuing observation that Ypsilanti had a lot going for it. The Hungarians, it seems, agree.

Contributed by Hank Prebys

# Nominations sought for marker awards

The time is coming again for The Heritage Foundation's Marker Awards Banquet. It will take place Wednesday, May 24, 2006 at the Ladies' Literary Club. At the banquet, owners of houses that meet certain criteria are recognized for their efforts and Historic Building Markers are awarded in order to publicly identify buildings of special merit.

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



How about bringing places that you think deserve an award to the attention of the selection committee?

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, 2006) a very brief description of the building and its address to:

Don Randazzo  
Chair, YHF Marker Committee  
6101 Hitchingham Road  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

# A special thank you to First Class Services



The Ypsilanti Heritage foundation wishes to express thanks to Jim Fagan of First Class Services in Ann Arbor. In late 2005, Jim put his professional training and equipment to use to clean the interior of the Starkweather Chapel in Highland Cemetery of debris, dirt, and the "trails" of nature's most enterprising shelter-seekers. This donated service will enable a clear focus on building stabilization and assessment.

# YHF Assists in Funding Property Surveys

In 2005 students from the Eastern Michigan Historic Preservation Program completed a survey of a number of the properties in the City of Ypsilanti. The work is required by the legislation that provides Ypsilanti's "Certified Local Government" status. This certification allows for certain extra funding possibilities for the city, a useful resource, especially during the current financial problems. Many but not all of the properties surveyed are in the Historic District. The YHF was pleased to provide the funding, \$1000, to cover the costs for film, film processing, paper, etc. This is one of the ways that the Heritage Foundation helps to further the goals of preserving the built environment by helping to make the history of a property easier to access.



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

## 2005/2006 SCHEDULE

**22**  
MARCH

**Historic Gardens**  
Ypsilanti Garden Club

**24**  
MAY

**Annual Awards Banquet**

26th Annual  
**Michigan Historic Preservation Network**  
 Conference Held at The Castle Museum, Saginaw, MI  
**Thursday- Saturday, April 20-22, 2006**

For More Information: [www.mhpn.org](http://www.mhpn.org)  
 (517) 371-8080 Fax (517) 371-9090 • E-mail: [inegood@mhpn.org](mailto:inegood@mhpn.org)

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

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

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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, 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, January 25, 2006, 7:30 pm*

### Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation Board Members

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The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation  
 c/o Don Randazzo  
 6101 Hitchingham Road  
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