



IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • OCTOBER 2003

Russell Bidlack Dead At 83



Russell Bidlack speaking on the Geddes Letters at the Observatory in 2001. Photo: S. Wineberg.

Professor Russell E. Bidlack died at his home on September 18, 2003 after a courageous eight-month battle with pancreatic cancer. Russ served as President of the WCHS from June 1961 to June 1962 and continued to be involved with us in some fashion for the rest of his life. I first encountered Russ at a talk he gave in 1982 on *Ann Allen* (our town's namesake) and the founding of Ann Arbor to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the WCHS. Both my husband and I were astonished that we were so heartily entertained by his mild manner and sly sense of humor—he made history come alive! He described tracking down the last living descendants of Ann Allen in Virginia and his other efforts in fleshing out what little documentation existed from the 1820s and 1830s, the decades when Ann Arbor was first being settled.

Russell served as the Dean of the School of Library Science for many years until his retirement in 1985. After that he devoted his life to his favorite pursuits—researching the history of the town's earliest settlers and maintaining a newsletter for the Sparks family, the relations of his wife Melva. But he was actively involved in local history even before his retirement.

He was a regular contributor and speaker for the Society. His first article in the *Impressions* is dated July 1965 and was entitled "*Glimpses of Ann Arbor 100 Years Ago.*" In an *Impressions* from June 1973,

it was reported that "in anticipation of the upcoming Sesquicentennial in Ann Arbor, Dr. Russell Bidlack 'revived' the life and activities of *John Allen*, founder of our city. The meeting was held in the Ann Arbor Masonic Temple, built in 1925, and slated for demolition soon." In November of 1985, he spoke on "*The Short and Troubled Lives of Elisha and Mary Ann Rumsey*" (the other founders of Ann Arbor). In 1991, he presented the Society with a small Bible that had belonged to Ann Allen, which was given to us by Miss Sara McCue, Ann Allen's great-great granddaughter. It is one of our most precious artifacts. His work on this subject would eventually culminate in his book, *Ann Arbor's First Lady: Events in the Life of Ann I. Allen* (Bentley Historical Library, 1998) about which he spoke to the Society in February 1997.

In the September 1996 *Impressions* we can read about "*The Personal Misfortunes of John Allen*" which led to the founding of Ann Arbor. In March of 1997, we published his research in "*Ann Allen, Ann Arbor's First Lady*". In October 1998, he spoke on "*Ann Arbor's 49ers*" (to the California Gold Rush, about which he published a pamphlet) to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of that event. And in the November *Impressions* of 1998 he appeared on our cover signing the signature quilt.

His last project involved me when I was President of WCHS. Just before my term ended, I received a letter from a postal dealer asking if I knew of anyone interested in the letters of *John Geddes* [one of Ann Arbor's earliest settlers]. He was asking thousands of dollars and I lamented that this group would be split up and sold to stamp collectors. But Russ came to the rescue and purchased 100 of the letters for almost \$10,000. Forty-one of them were from John to his brother William in Ohio, which he transcribed and spoke on to us in February of 2001. His talk, entitled "*Dear Brother*" was to have been published eventually as a book.

That year we celebrated the 200th birthday of John Geddes in 2001 in the house he built at 4479 E. Huron River Drive (now owned by our Education Chair Sally Silvennoinen) and lunched with Denise Fredericks who discovered the diary of John Geddes just months after Russ published the letters. It was an exciting year and I was able to tape Russ talking about his favorite subject that year. He had confided to me that he'd sold some property and wanted to give himself a present. These letters couldn't have fallen into better hands. We maintained a correspondence over the years and I was able to steer some important letters to him that I found on Ebay.

The town of Ann Arbor is much diminished by his death, but through his publications he will continue to delight us with the wonders of local history. I have lost a dear friend and mentor and will miss him very much.

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INFORMATION

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Susan Cee Wineberg, Editor
swines@umich.edu

Museum On Main Street
500 N. Main Street at Beakes Street
Post Office Box 3336
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

Phone: 734.662.9092

Fax: 734.663.0039

Email: wchs-500@ameritech.net

Web Site:

www.washtenawhistory.org

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LORRI SIPES • AIA, SMITH GROUP

Surprises In Preservation



Lorri Sipes of the SmithGroup talked on Preservation Surprises. Photo: S. Wineberg

Before an audience of 35-40 people in the ballroom of the Courthouse Square Senior Apartment Building, Lorri Sipes spoke on the surprises of various types (happiness, the unexpected, and things of astonishment) she has run into throughout her 22-year career as a preservation architect. Sipes is a native of Kansas City, Kansas and received her Masters in Architecture from the University of Michigan in 1978. One of her mentors, Kingsbury Marzolf, was in the audience and she recalled the happy days of attending seminars in his home about the history of architecture.

Sipes was a co-founder of a historic preservation firm, Architects Four in 1984 and for 15 years helped develop its reputation. In recognition of its success, it merged in 1999 with the Detroit firm of Smith, Hinchman and Grylls to form the SmithGroup. She serves as their director of historic preservation. Sipes has overseen the revitalization and rehabilitation of over 150 National Landmarks including Cranbrook, the Henry Ford Museum, the Old Executive Office Building in Washington DC and Michigan's Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. Her work on the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing won her an ALA Honor Award in 1996. She has also received 15 local and regional design awards.

Sipes has a sense of mission about expanding awareness of the preservation ethic and she has spoken about preservation in public schools and before community organizations. She believes that historic preservation is more than a concern for individual buildings—that the historic character of neighborhoods and entire communities is equally important. She has acted on her beliefs by helping to design the Homeless Shelter for Washtenaw County and serving on the Downtown Development Authority, where she has advocated for maintaining the historic character of downtown Ann Arbor.

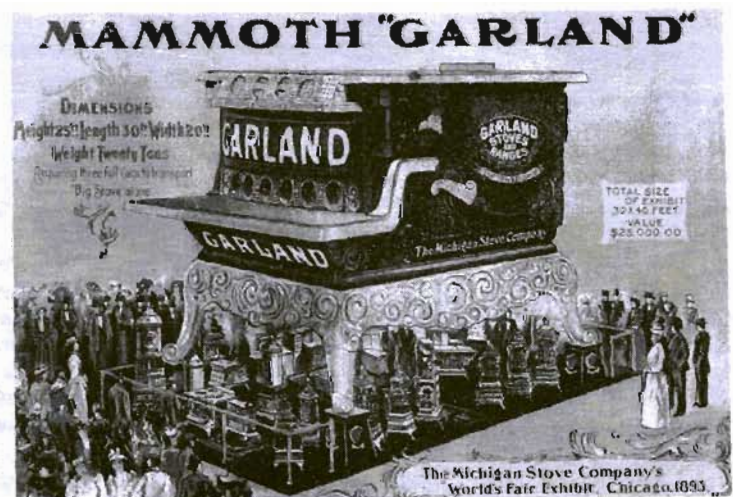
Thanks to Ann and Greg DeFreytas for supplying the delicious refreshments.

"When Ralph called me and told me 'this is your topic,' I had to think a little about 'Preservation Surprises' and consult my Webster's dictionary. There are three interesting aspects to surprises that are mentioned in the dictionary—one is to come upon suddenly or unexpectedly (like opening up a wall and finding a 100-year old letter stuck inside); second, is to attack or capture suddenly and without warning (which seemed a little more warlike than I wanted) and third, was the 'cause to feel wonder or astonishment by being unexpected.' I'd like to talk today about a combination of coming upon something suddenly and feeling wonder and astonishment that I've felt in a lot of the work that I've done in my career.

I decided when I was 13 that I wanted to be an architect. I have an undergradu-

ate degree from the University of Kansas and came here to do graduate work and then move on to Chicago. But here I am and I'm glad I didn't make that final step. In 1978 I went to work for the Detroit firm of William Kessler and Associates. This is a wonderful, wonderful firm led by Bill Kessler who died last year. He was a marvelous designer and his right hand person was Ed Francis who was very interested in history and preservation and did some of the very early work in historic preservation in Michigan. I had the great fortune of learning from him and being the only other person interested in the history of architecture in the office. One of my earliest preservation sketches was for the Traverse City Opera House. Ed and I were doing a Master Plan of that victorian theater and it was a wonderful introduction for me into the technology and physical issues of historic preservation.

In 1984, I formed a firm with three partners in Ann Arbor known as Architects Four. We practiced under that name for the next 15 years and our premier project was the restoration past of the Michigan State Capitol (the room built as the Supreme Court Room, later the Appropriations Room). I have been the Director of Historic Preservation for the SmithGroup



Michigan Stove ad from the Columbia Exposition of 1893. Courtesy Lorri Sipes.

since 1999. They are a large national company [Ed: the sixth largest in the U.S.] and I'm happy to say that we've just been awarded a contract with the National Park Service for the Midwest Region which covers eight states. We will be working towards the preservation of the many wonderful historic properties which they own. My future is also on this chart—in January I will be leaving the SmithGroup and setting up my own practice as a consultant for preservation projects. I also hope to do more writing and some academic investigations as well.

I wanted to emphasize today the importance of physical evidence. I am also a genealogist and know the value of paper research. With architectural preservation there is also paper research and historical documents that must be looked at. For me, what's interesting is the detective work linking the physical remains of buildings to paper documents or folklore. Sometimes they contradict, and sometimes they verify each other.

The first topic is chronology. A lot of the buildings we work with have a history and a folklore from the owners and the community which may or may not be true. When we arrive on site, we investigate the mystique by looking at the physical evidence. The restoration of the **McGuffey home in Ohio**, which belonged to the inventor of the McGuffey Reader—the textbook used in the 19th century to teach children how to read—showed us that the story of how the building had evolved from a log cabin to an 1860s building was false. We used plat maps, Sanborns maps, and physical evidence and they indicated that the building was built at one time, not in parts as the myth had it. It was a very unique shape for the period and it was reasonable that people would question it. By looking at how the building was put together we were able to show that the written evidence was false and that the basic structure was built in 1828. The monumental staircase was added later which we discovered when

we carefully peeled off wallpaper and located the original entries to the house and the location of the original staircases.

Here is a picture of a **Gasholder Building in Oberlin, Ohio** from ca. 1875. This is exactly what it did. It has a huge plunger in it that is filled with natural gas which is released under pressure. It is a good example of how the form follows the function and its use today is a surprise. Now, so many of these surprises are gone.



The stove in its last days on Belle Isle ca. 1970. Courtesy Lorri Sipes.

There were two or three of these in every community in the last part of the 19th century and they are all gone. It has been preserved and Oberlin has made it into a Visitor's Center. It is now a reminder of our industrial heritage.

I've been surprised a lot by changes in building codes and how challenging it is to bring a 19th century building into the 21st century from a life safety perspective. When older buildings were built they didn't have building codes and were built for style and function more than safety. Many of them didn't survive for that reason, as many of the wood structures were destroyed by fire.

A project we worked on for several years was an addition to the **Schlenker Hardware Building** on West Liberty in **Ann Arbor**. It has several life safety and building code issues. The biggest problem was that it is in the Allen Creek Floodplain and as such we couldn't have habitable space on the ground floor. This area is used for parking and the building ap-

pears to be on stilts. Despite our best intentions and the wall we built, the basement of the original building flooded recently and we worried we hadn't done enough. It turned out to have been a clogged catch basin on the other side of the building. With too much rain, the water had nowhere to go but the basement. But we have discovered the source of the problem and we hope it has been solved.

These floodplain issues have been prominent in Ann Arbor recently with the building of the new 'Y' on West Washington and the construction of the Homeless Shelter nearby on West Huron.

Another discovery with the Schlenker Building was that some pieces become attractive artifacts. The parapet on the front was revealed when we removed the porcelain enamel panels and we wondered where the limestone coping stones might be. We discovered that they were taken to the Schlenker's cottage in Whitmore Lake where they were used as benches! And they wouldn't part with them.

We had similar experiences with our renovation of the State Capitol. People had taken things when it was remodeled in the 1970s and they didn't want to give them back.

Another project of ours was the **Crazy Wisdom and Book Store** at 114 S. Main St. in **Ann Arbor**. It is a good example of the evolution of our downtown spaces and retail space in general. It was built in three stages, with a 50-foot deep store to which more was added later to create a 120-foot deep site. It was retail at the front, storage at the back and residential above, with a small attic for storage. Today we have bigger stores and need more space so we helped this owner expand his retail offerings into two floors while still meeting building and fire codes. The central stair became a focal point for safety issues and exiting requirements and safety issues drove a lot of the design in this case. At first it was the push and pull of history coming into conflict with current safety requirements. We were able to do it

successfully however.

I also want to talk about partnerships, public process and funding since I'm always surprised by what happens as a result of some of these collaborations. The **gigantic Garland Stove** (known as the **Michigan Stove**), which was built of wood originally for the **Columbian Exposition** in Chicago in 1893, had moved around Detroit five times before it was sent to Fort Wayne for storage in 1975 where it deteriorated into a pile of carved wood! The tag line read "someday Detroit will be as famous for its cars as it is for its stoves." In the late 19th century, stoves were the equivalent of cars in terms of driving the Michigan economy. This stove was the size of a small house. Its last home was on **Belle Isle** and it had a dome inside which could be lit from the interior. We never did figure out what this was for. Anyway, I was amazed that anyone knew what this pile of rubble was and that it hadn't just been used as firewood! In 1995, when Representative Hertel took over the leadership of the **Michigan State Fair**, he wanted it restored as a symbol of Detroit's Renaissance and wanted it finished for the Michigan State Fair Sesquicentennial. We were hired and worked with his staff, people from the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) and Sandra S. Clark, and many volunteers to restore this architectural folly.

One of the most interesting things for me was that we were able to partner with the auto companies to recreate the scrollwork on the skirt of the stove from a computer model that we created. We approached this project by first laying out the pieces like a giant jigsaw puzzle and learned what we were missing and what we needed replicated. We created a computer model of the entire stove and pattern makers from the auto companies helped. It was great to partner with many elements in the community and was very



The stove was stored at Fort Wayne, where it literally fell apart. Courtesy Lorri Sipes

gratifying. Today this stove is sitting on the Fairgrounds impressing people again with its immense charm.

In **Grand Rapids, Michigan** we completed a project for a contemporary arts center about seven years ago known as the **Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts**. UICA is a large cooperative of artists and one of the greatest projects of my career because it enabled me to work with visual artists, performing artists and media people. I created a space for them to do their art. At UICA they are not terribly interested in displaying art—they are interested in *doing* art. So I had to get away from the idea of art hanging on a wall. This is in the Heartside Neighborhood that is just past the historic district, and is a neighborhood in transition. There is some



The Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts in Grand Rapids. Courtesy Lorri Sipes.

rebirth going on but it is still a rough place. UICA sees art as a community effort and this went well with my philosophy about preservation, which is that it is about community and the stories we can tell together through our physical world.

This 1911 building was a car dealership and has one wonderful open first floor with a ramp down to parking for the cars. The first floor has three truss columns that support a marvelous undulating roof that looks like a circus tent. This is a great space of about 14,000 square feet and we

had a program of bathrooms, offices and storage rooms. We also had to connect the lower level that became classrooms, studios, and rental spaces for the artists and their work. We designed a new film theater in the back, since film is a very important part of their program. This was "found space" that had been added in the 1930s.

Another community arts project that we are still working on is typical of a lot of preservation projects which involve clients who deal with culture, not business. As a result, funding issues become very important. This building is the **Furniture Factory**, which is its historic name in **Detroit** on Second Avenue near Selden. This will be the home of **Walk 'N Squawk**, a theater company.

There are other interesting challenges in preservation. One involved work we did on the **Lake St. Clair Old South Channel Range Lights** built in 1859. We had to survey it from a small boat which was no easy task. Then we were hired (1993) to revamp the **Stone Mill** (1929) at the **Henry Ford Museum** in **Dearborn**. The previous Director had made it his home, and had moved from a large 3000 square foot home to this one, which was 600 square feet. Everything had been stripped down to its barest minimum and its design was approached like that of a boat.

You had to make every space count. Now they have a new president and it's used as a guest house!

The **Strand Theater in Pontiac** had several structural surprises. Built in 1928 as part of a theater chain, it is now a performing arts center and needed dressing rooms and prop rooms. As we tried to squeeze these things into the current building, we noticed it was standing on dirt, cobblestones and poured concrete and not much else. Some columns were 6 feet deep and others were 2 feet deep. The lack of proper foundations made us wonder how it had stood as long as it had.

Another structural surprise was at the **Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island**. We spent 10 years working there to open up a new area, and while there we found foundations made of tree trunks! We found the opposite at the **Earhart Manor in Ann Arbor**, the main building of Concordia College. The previous mansion had burned down and they vowed 'never again' and in 1939 built it like an office building with reinforced concrete. It was a nightmare to try and insert an elevator into this structure!

One of our projects that had no surprises was in the rehabilitation of the historic 1932 **Post Office in Jackson, Michigan** which was moved 10 years ago and then sat vacant. It was purchased by Consumers Energy who decided to use the historic colonnaded entry as their lobby. Its granite and marble lobby is preserved in every detail while a modern building connects to it beyond the bare sorting room which now serves as their food service, wellness and human resources area. The old post office marks a grand entry to their 14-story office tower which sits on a 10-acre campus like site. This is a great example of finding a new use for a historic building.

We are also working on the interior of the **Rackham Graduate School in Ann Arbor** (designed by our predecessor **Smith, Hinchman and**



The ground floor of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in Ann Arbor. Courtesy Lorri Sipes.

Grylls in 1938). The mechanical and electrical systems were completely worn out and had to be replaced. But the public rooms and the fabric of the building remain intact. We inserted new technology into the historic fabric, but there wasn't a lot to struggle over since there was no change in use.

The **Michigan State Capitol in Lansing** was the ultimate in restoration for us. Parts of the building had been converted from

one floor to two. Now we were among the four firms hired to put them back to one floor and restore their original grandeur. We did the Senate Office and Chamber. There was no change in the use of these ceremonial spaces, but the insertion of 21st century technology into the space was not easy.

Fort Mackinac will probably bring us more surprises in the future. They have walls built in the 18th century that are collapsing and a bottle in one of them had a note from the workers of the 1920s! So, SmithGroup left a bottle with a note too and put it back in the wall. I like the idea of tying the past to the present.

In summing up, I think we can say there has been growth in the commitment to preservation and a new ethic has emerged but it is still a fight in many communities. The success of Heritage Tourism has helped change people's minds about preservation but as my mentor

Kingsbury Marzolf once said 'we only have defeats and truces—never victories.' Our work in Ann Arbor has been rewarded in many ways but my favorite is the **sandwich at Zingerman's** named 'Architects Four.' There are more people getting recognition for preservation and that is encouraging too. I think there is a groundswell building up and I hope it continues."

In the question and answer period, Sipes was asked about the Michigan Central Railroad Depot in Detroit. She did a walk-through recently and noted that while stripped of many details, it is a well-built, solid building. Howard Fox, a WCHS member, commented that when he worked at King-Seeley in the 1960s-1980s, a 100-year storm caused a manhole to blow up like Old Faithful and all the cars in the lot were submerged very quickly. This was a follow up on Sipes' comments about the flooding at Schlenker Hardware which is just across the tracks.



The restored façade of Schlenker Hardware in Ann Arbor. Courtesy Lorri Sipes.

Your Museum And Society

We have received almost 40 applications for our part-time **Museum Director** position and our committee has its work cut out for it. There are many wonderful candidates applying for the job and the committee hopes soon to make a list of people to interview. We are gratified by the response and by the high quality of experienced people applying for this position. **Randy LaHote** is doing a fantastic job coordinating this.

In the last newsletter I neglected to thank **Ann DeFreitas** for her work on the **Garden Committee**. My face is red but my conscience is clear because I apologized to her and am telling you all about it!

President **Pauline Walters** reports that **Doug Kelley**, curator of the Democratic Archive in Ann Arbor, has offered to obtain 16 posters being offered by Monticello (Charlottesville, VA) about the **Expedition of Lewis and Clark**. We are hoping to get a set and mount an exhibit on their fabulous journey early next year. Of course, Washtenaw County didn't even exist then, but we'll try to find some appropriate artifacts to display along with the posters. Thanks to Doug for doing this for us.

Our treasurer **Patty Creal** reports that you like our grippers! One person even sent us \$1,000 and thanked us for sending something useful. Thank you all a thousand times. We've made over \$3,000 so far on the gripper and we sorely need this money for museum maintenance and repairs. Speaking of money, **Tom Freeman** reports that the **Bach Bequest Fund** has started to make money again and is at the highest (\$619,000) it's ever been. We are required by law to spend the growth for operating expenses but I don't see us having any trouble doing that! And in another monetary vein, **Dick Galant** will apply to the AAACF for a \$5,000 grant to hire a professional to help us do budgeting and accounting.

Roy Reynolds will help us find a better paint for our fence. It's been painted many times in the last 10 years and we'd like to have a small break between painting sessions. **Judy Chrisman**, Collections Chair, presented a list of 35 duplicate clothing and book items to be deaccessioned. We are still removing our items from Willow Run in anticipation of its closing, so we are trying not to move things we don't need. As a result, we will not have an

exhibit up until November when we have our two holiday open houses.

Pat Austin proposed and the Board approved two standing rules changes which would change how we approve minutes for our Board meetings and Annual Meetings so they do not have to be read aloud. Pat also informed us that most Boards now do not name the person who makes a motion, or the second, to avoid lawsuits. We voted to consider using this method. Board Member and County Clerk **Peggy Haines** informed us that we can now do genealogy from home by using the Washtenaw County website www.ewashtenaw.gov. There is now an index for deaths and marriages online as well as the grantor/grantee index for property sales. You can order copies of these documents from them for a small fee. Hooray for Washtenaw County!

The Parker Hatchery Explained

Last month's *Impressions* ran a "Remember When" with a post card from the Parker Poultry Farm and Hatchery on Dixboro Road. My description of where it was located was wrong and I heard from many people about that! Thanks to **Dale Leslie** and **Roger Sutherland** who led me to **Grace Parker** and **Rev. Jerry Parker**. I also got an email from **Ola Parker Bolgos**, the last of the six children of George and Grace Parker, the former owners of the Mill. Grace explained that when the Parkers came from England, two half brothers lived in different houses on Dixboro Road. One built the fieldstone house and mill and the other built the hatchery further north on Dixboro. Jerry Parker is a descendant of **Floyd** and **Myrtle Parker**—the poultry people—and actually lived on the farm from 1974-1978 when he was first married. They sold off the last acres in 1982 when his grandmother Myrtle died. All the buildings and the old house built by William E. Parker (his great-grandfather) were torn down soon after that. We learned from Dale Leslie that in 1934, the Parkers had an **international egg-laying champion** in the Barred Rock class (318 eggs in one year!) Thanks to all who set me straight on this one.

News You Can Use

Check out the **September/October** issue of **Old House Journal**. This is their 30th year and this issue is full of all the best tips they have learned in the last 30 years. If you are an inveterate keeper of magazines, this is the one to have!

In a similar vein, the **Historic American Buildings Survey** is turning 70 years old. Started during the Depression in 1934 as a way to get work for unemployed architects, HABS continues today and its drawings, housed at the **Library of Congress**, have served as a record of many buildings that are no longer with us. While I was looking at the HABS drawings of the Ladies Literary Association in **Ypsilanti**, I learned that it once had a cupola on the roof! Today HABS continues in partnership with the **American Institute of Architects (AIA)** and the **National Park Service** and is the world's foremost documentation of historic buildings. Photographs, prints and full size reproductions of drawings can be ordered by mail from the Library of Congress. See www.cr.nps.gov/habs/haer or write them at 1849 C St., NW, Washington DC 20240.

The **National Trust for Historic Preservation** welcomed its 23rd historic site in July. The **Museum of Afro-American History** partnered with the National Trust to bring an important group of buildings—the **African Meeting House** and **Abiel Smith School on Boston's Beacon Hill** and the **African Meeting House** and **Higginbotham House** on Nantucket, into the Trust's Family of historic sites.

Next Program

**Sunday • November 16
Glacier Hills • 2:00 PM**

Sabra Briere on the
"Lower Town
Historic District"
at Glacier Hills, Hansen Room
1200 Earhart Road.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The Town

Many of you have been following the debate on **tall buildings** and the **Green Belt Proposal** which will be on the November ballot. Mayor **John Hiefjte** has proposed that we replace the city's parkland acquisition program with one to preserve around 7,000 acres of the best farmland, rolling hills and open space. And it won't raise our taxes! Of course we think this sounds like a truly sensible idea and hope that the voters think so too. It's nice to have open and green spaces surrounding our lovely town, but unless sited properly, tall buildings in the center will have a negative effect on our historic downtown buildings. Of course, designed carefully and in the right place, dense urban housing will serve to keep our downtown humming with activity. Now, if only they would open a grocery store in the central business district!

There is also a movement afoot to substantially **expand the Farmer's Market** on Detroit Street. The City of Ann Arbor Department of Parks and Recreation has employed the firm of the **Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio** and its team of designers and engineers to "prepare a Master Plan for the modernization and expansion of the Farmer's Market facility." You can see their plans on their website at www.jhle-studio.com/market. Six plans are proposed with varying configurations, including a new park and plaza, a new 'town green' on the lawn of Community High, new wider stalls along Detroit St and a new building on Fourth Ave. and possible winterized space. Many of the plans would require a further **realignment of Detroit St.** (bad idea—let's put it back the way it was!) I encourage all of you to look at this since I found it rather frightening. I can see this as a battle brewing in the future.

The **Clements Library** at 909 S. University always has wonderful and interesting exhibits in their beautiful space. Their current exhibit, up until November 21, is about "**George Washington: Getting to Know the Man behind the Image.**" From **November 24-April 30, 2004**, their exhibit will be on "**Creatures Great**

and Small: Americans' Love Affair with Animals." You can find out more by calling 734-764-2347 or visiting their website at www.clements.umich.edu.

The connection between the **Cobblestone Farm** and **UM Observatory** will be revealed by **Nan Hodges** who will lecture **Tuesday, October 21**, at 3 PM on "**Harriet Low: An American Woman in China, 1829-1834.**" The **Cobblestone Farm Association** has worked with the City of Ann Arbor in the management and restoration of Cobblestone Farm (1844) for almost 30 years. The CFA handles fundraising, restoration and collections while the City maintains the site and its educational programming. They hope to continue this working relationship for another 30 years! To celebrate this relationship, a special **30th Anniversary Cobblestone Farm News** will be published in the **Winter of 2004**. If you were active in the organization in the 1970s, "please share some of your stories" with **Tom Dodd** by calling 734-434-6467 or email him at tommydodd@earthlink.net.

The latest issue **Treeline** from the **UM Arboretum** made a spectacular announcement: they will be merging into an administrative alliance with the **Matthaei Botanical Gardens** and **Bob Grese**, the Director of the Arb, will be the Director of the new combined unit. Grese noted they've been busy over the summer ('we didn't really take a vacation this year') and have several projects underway. One is the **Gateway Garden**, the second phase of the landscaping around the historic **Burnham House** designed by the firm of **Oehme van Sweden and Associates**. A celebration for the completion will be held **Saturday October 11**. A **Centennial Shrub Collection** is also being developed at the **Geddes** entrance to the Arb and they hope to have it ready by the Arb's **Centennial in 2006**. It will include old favorites like spiraea, mock-orange, lilac, Rose of Sharon, weigela, deutzia, cotoneaster, smoke tree, viburnum varieties and other shrubs. They've also been working on the **School Girls' Glen** and

the **Laurel Ridge Trail**, a **Council Ring** at **Heathdale**, the **Natural Areas** and more. They urge us and we urge you to come out and explore this fall. Call 734-998-9540 or visit www.umich.edu/~wwwarb.

The **UM Intramural Sports Building (IMSB)** at **606 E. Hoover** is being celebrated on its **75th anniversary** in a series of events beginning Homecoming Weekend on **October 17** with an **Open House**. Completed in 1928 and designed by **Smith, Hinchman and Grylls** of Detroit, its style was described as "**Lombard Romanesque.**" It contains a beautiful tiled swimming pool and lobby and struck longtime Director of Recreational Sports **Mike Stevenson** as "an art museum, not a sports facility." The foresight of **Elmer Mitchell**, the father of intramural sports, will also be touted since his vision with this building makes it still very usable today. You can read more about in the University Record issue of September 29 at www.umich.edu/urecord.

And speaking of historic buildings, the University announced its plans to **demolish** the historic **Planada Apartment Building** (1929) at 1127 E. Ann St. in October. This building was designated by the City of Ann Arbor in 1992 but lost its designation when it was sold to the University. Other buildings protected by the same ordinance, known as the **IHP** or the **Individual Historic Properties Historic District**, lost their protection when the courts struck down the ordinance in 2001. After consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) it was determined that some of these buildings could be protected using a theme nomination.

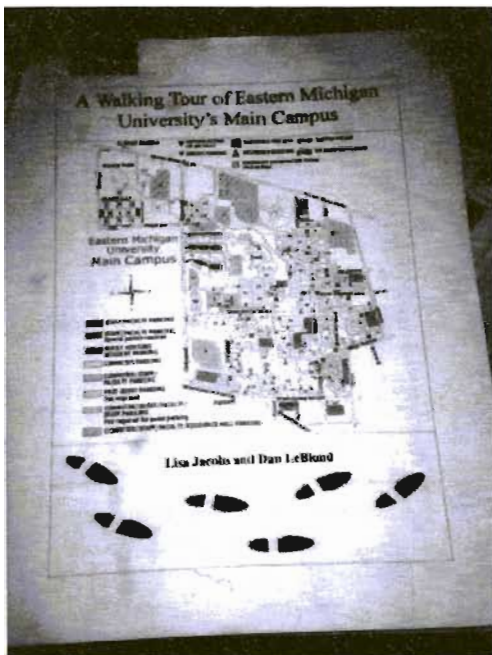
As a result, the **IHP Study Committee** (of which I am a member and which is chaired by **Louisa Pieper**) has been working for two years and held a public hearing September 18 for **four theme districts**. The themes cover **apartment buildings, transportation related buildings, commercial/industrial buildings and churches**. Ten people attended and four spoke. Comments from the SHPO were received and the committee continues to

Around The Town

Continued from page 7.

work to bring this ordinance in line with state law. The Ann Arbor Planning Commission will hold a public hearing in October and then it will proceed to City Council for approval.

We are keeping our fingers crossed as many important landmarks in the city were protected by this ordinance, including the **Tuomy Hills Gas Station** at Stadium and Washtenaw, the **Ann Arbor Railroad Depot** on Ashley St., the **Anberay Apartments** on East University, **Hildene Manor** at 2220 Washtenaw, the original **Bethel AME Church** on N. Fourth Avenue, the **Ann Arbor Bus Depot** on West Huron, the **Allmendinger Organ Factory** on S. First, **City Brewery** (The Blind Pig) on S. First, the **Pardon Blocks** on N. Main St. at Miller, **Dr. Chase's Printing House** at 301 N. Main and the **Bell Telephone Building** on E. Washington, to name a few! These buildings were protected for almost 14 years with no adverse results. We hope City Council will see that they continue to need protection from all the development pressures in Ann Arbor and approve their new designation in the near future.



A proposed walking tour of the EMU campus. Photo: S. Wineberg.

SUSAN WINEBERG

Around The County

Several members of the **Old West Side Garden Club** were treated to a special day of apple picking at the Saline farm on Hack Road near Macon Rd. of board member **Sue Kosky**. Sue and her husband Tom generously let us pick their varieties of antique apples including pitmaster pineapple russets, jonathans, winesaps, sterns and mothers. We were even treated to yummy baked goods and applesauce made by Sue. Sue and Tom have lived in their Greek Revival (ca. 1850) home for 30 years. Sue will soon be publishing her book on Saline in the Arcadia series. A retired nurse, we were lucky to get her on our board and she now runs our Museum Shop and helps maintain the garden.

The **Saline Area Historical Society** is focusing their programs and exhibits on **Henry Ford** because this marks the 100th year of the company. Saline was the site of one of Ford's **Village Industries**. He purchased the Haywood flour mill (now Wellers) in 1937 to produce soy bean oil and plastic parts. He altered the main building, constructed the carriage house and dammed the Saline River for hydro-electric power. Many local farmers grew soybeans for this operation. Ford moved the **Hoyt School** from Saline Township to its present location near Wellers and it is now used for commercial purposes. His personal connection with Saline residents led to his purchase of the **Baptist Church Parsonage** which is now at **Greenfield Village** and known as the **Adams House**. I visited it recently and learned that it was built by George Matthew Adams whose "Today's Talk" column appeared in 19th century newspapers across the country. He was one of five children raised in this house, built in 1840 and expanded in 1870.

On **Wednesday, October 15**, a slide show by **Bob Kreipke** will be given on the *History of the Ford Motor Company*. On **Wednesday, November 19**, **Pat Molloy** will lecture on the *Ford School in Saline*. All

meetings are held at the Depot and begin at 7:30. They are open to all. On **Saturday, December 13**, **The Rentschler Farm** will be decorated for Christmas and open to the public from 11 AM-3 PM. If you like to plan ahead, the **Antique Show** at the Saline Farm Council Grounds will be **Friday and Saturday, January 16 and 17, 2004**. For more information call 734-944-0442.

The SAHS is also trying to find a home for a Greek Revival house now on the property of the new high school. Known as the **Hertler Farmstead**, it is believed to have been built in the 1850s. If you want it, or know someone who does, give them a call!

The folks in **Dexter** were hoping to pass a millage to support recreational activities. Some of that money (about \$80,000) was earmarked to help purchase **Gordon Hall** when it comes on the market. Unfortunately, it was soundly defeated by a 3-1 margin. We hope they keep trying when the economy improves!

In **Ypsilanti**, things are hopping! The **Michigan Firehouse Museum** held an ice cream social on October 5 to celebrate the Grand Opening of their new facility (one of our programs was held there earlier this year). On October 1, it was reported in the *Ann Arbor News* that they were awarded a \$2,500 grant from the Automobile National Heritage Association (ANHA) to develop a website on firefighting history. Congratulations are in order!

Also in Ypsilanti, the students of **Preservation Eastern**, the student organization of the Historic Preservation Program at **Eastern Michigan University**, are gearing up to make sure that the new **Master Plan** (led by four consulting teams including Quinn/Evans and Pollack Design Associates of Ann Arbor) protects the historic buildings on campus. They are especially concerned about those built in the 1930s and 40s by the WPA. Several of these buildings appear to be in some jeopardy. These buildings are **King, Rackham, Brown-Munson, Jones-Goddard, and Briggs Hall**. The students are currently

organizing walking tours to educate the public on the value of these buildings. There are also plans to move the historic **Geddes Town Hall Schoolhouse** since it is prone to flooding and could be better interpreted elsewhere. The Master Plan will be completed in January 2004. If you want to see the website or comment on the plans, visit them at www.emich.edu/masterplan/index.html or www.emich.edu/masterplan/comments.html.

Preservation Eastern also continues its program of speakers with **Marla Overhiser**, staff of the Detroit Historic District Commission, talking on her Detroit home restoration project which was featured on HGTV's *Restore America* last July. Her talk will be on **Friday November 14**, at King Hall, from 7-9 PM. You can email Michellesponseller@hotmail.com for more details. You can also learn more about the program and its activities in Franklin, Fort Wayne and Fayette by subscribing to their newsletter for \$10/year.

Graduates of the Preservation Program at EMU have also been busy. Under the leadership of **Bill Click**, alumni of the program have formed a **Historic Preservation Alumni Chapter**, and will be the first group to hold an official event at the new (and controversial) **President's House**. On **Monday, October 20**, from 6:30-8:30 PM, the house will be open to members and non-members alike. It is located at 790 N. Hewitt Road. If you are a graduate of the program, you can join the group for \$20 and keep in touch with other graduates and burning preservation issues. If you have questions about the reception, call 734-461-2251. You have heard of Bill Click in these pages in other contexts—he is managing all our repair work at the museum and doing a fine job.

An article in the *Ann Arbor News* (September 25) showcased **Depot Town** as the setting for a **Toyota commercial**. A Boston company is shooting the 30-second commercial for the **RAV4 2004** that will be aired nationally this month. The Sidetrack was the backdrop in an earlier Chevrolet commercial as well. The head



Sue Kosky with one of her antique apple trees in Saline. Photo: S. Wineberg

of the Conventions and Visitor's Bureau noted that "people are starting to equate Ypsilanti with automobiles." This is a good thing.

Chelsea is also making news. Its central business district is expanding to accommodate a huge development project with the landmark **Clock Tower** as its centerpiece. **McKinley Associates**, an Ann Arbor company, plans to invest \$10 million to redevelop a series of historic buildings including the **Glazier Stove building**, the **Gymnasium Building** built for Glazier Stove employees, and several other buildings on N. Main St. Also in Chelsea, we are sad to report that **Dudley Holmes**, the uncle of WCHS supporter Howdy Holmes died September 22 at the age of 90. We send our condolences to the family once again.

The **Washtenaw Land Trust** is really hitting the big time. Sen. **George McGovern**, "former U.S. Senator, author, war hero, diplomat and champion of the American farmer" spoke to the membership and received the **2003 Preservationist of the Year award** on October 9th at their Tenth Annual Fall Dinner. McGovern was heralded for his record of public service and his creative idea on farming and farmland preservation.

The cover of this month's newsletter (*Network News*) from the **Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN)** has an article by **Barry Wauldron** on "*Washtenaw County Historic Resources Online: Bringing preservation to com-*

munity planning and to the public." It features a photograph of an Italianate Four Square House in **Manchester Township**, a barn in **Bridgewater Township** and an octagon house in **Northfield Township**, and focuses on the rapid growth from rural to suburban in many parts of Washtenaw County. He states that Washtenaw County lost 24,000 acres of farmland between 1987 and 1997. It mentions a January 2003 article in the **Michigan Society of Planning** newsletter *Michigan Planner* written by **Dr. Robert Ward** of

EMU which suggests enabling legislation for a Historic Preservation Plan for the county. To help in this effort, the planning department in Washtenaw County and **Marnie Paulus**, the Historic Preservation Coordinator for the county, have prepared a website using the historic data collected over the past two decades. HistWeb plots historic resource data onto the county GIS base map. To find out more, you can contact Marnie at 734-222-6878 or email paulusm@ewashtenaw.org. This issue of *Network News* also featured a page long article on the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, complete with photo. To join the Network and receive their newsletter, write them at 314 1/2 N. Walnut, Lansing, MI 48933 or visit www.mhpn.org.

And the September-October issue of *Michigan History* magazine, published by the **Michigan Historical Center**, noted this month that Washtenaw County has the largest concentration of **cobblestone buildings** in the state. Cited as outstanding are the Benajah Ticknor farm (now the city-owned Cobblestone Farm Museum) and the privately-owned Orrin White house on Fuller Road near Gallup Park and Huron High School. You can read a description of the article at www.michiganhistorymagazine.com/index.html but you have to buy the magazine to read the story and see the pictures!

SUSAN WINEBERG

Beyond Washtenaw

The Plymouth Historical Museum announced a new lectures series on "The 20th Century—a Time of Innovation and Progress. On October 9th they had a lecture on 200 Years of the Camera. On Thursday, November 13, you can learn about "100 Years of Aviation." On Sunday, December 7th they will host a Museum Open House to hear the music of the 1940s and honor Pearl Harbor Day. Programs next year will be about judges and lawyers, the 100th anniversary of Ford Motor Company, the telephone, the radio, television and the computer. It looks like an exciting year. The series is held at the museum at 155 S. Main Street in Plymouth. The Plymouth Library and the Museum are offering genealogy workshop series as well. On Saturday October 11, learn about "Finding Your Female Ancestors." On Saturday, November 8, you can learn how to "Find your Civil War Ancestor." Sunday December 6, learn how to do "Advanced Irish Genealogy." All workshops are held from 10 AM-3 PM and are \$25.00. Call 734-455-8940 to make a reservation or learn more. They also have a new URL www.plymouthhistory.org. Or email plymouthhistoricalmuseum@netzero.net.

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network will hold its Fall Fundraiser on Friday, November 7 at the newly restored Skillman Branch of the Detroit Public Library. Tickets are \$125.00 and there will be a live auction. David Brown of the National Trust for Historic Preservation will be the keynote speaker. You can learn more from Sylvia Tillman, syltillman@wideopenwest.com. The Network is a great organization or historic preservation advocates covering the state of Michigan. Their newsletter *Network News* recently covered Washtenaw County's online database (see related story in Around the County) and wrote about Battlefield Archaeology in nearby Monroe.

This work in Monroe was in August on the River Raisin Battlefield Site from the War of 1812. It was led by Drs. Michael Pratt and William Rutter from the Mannik & Smith Group. They were looking for, and found, the fence (or puncheon) which once surrounded the original French settlement on the river. The site is on private property that houses a

defunct paper mill and the excavation is funded by the National Park Service Battlefield Protection Program. In this case, they aren't preserving a battlefield but uncovering one buried under industrial development 100 years ago. Our own EMU was a partner in the effort, with Kathryn Keefer, serving as research assistant on the project. If you want more information, contact Jeffrey Green, the Historic Preservation Planner for the City of Monroe, at 734-384-9106 or at jlgreen@ci.monroe.mi.us.

A program on "Archaeology in Oakland County" will be held Saturday, October 25, from 9 AM-noon at the historic one-room schoolhouse on the ground of the Governor Moses Wisner House and Museum at 405 Oakland Ave. in Pontiac. This 143-year old house and museum is the home of the local historical society. You can reach them at 248-338-6732.

Closer to home, the Pinckney Historical Society held an Open House at the Hicks "Red" School House on M-36 and Farley Road. The school still stands where it was built in 1849-50 by brothers William and James Hall. It still has the original ax-hewn beams and square head nails. It was named for George Hicks, a school board member at the time. It was one of the area's longest used one-room schools and didn't close until 1949. But wait! In 1969, Helen Van Blaircum, the principal of Pinckney Elementary decided to go back to teaching and re-opened the school with 30 students. It was used as such until 1972 and then was used for storage until the historical

society took over and restored it in 1981.

In Dearborn, the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village re-opened with a new name ("The Henry Ford") after a year of renovations. I visited Greenfield Village in August and had a ride in a Model A car [I'll have more to write on this in a future newsletter]. Along with this new face, Ford Motor Company is celebrating its 100th anniversary throughout the year. One project underway is to record the memories of people who worked for Ford's Village Industries. Henry Ford wanted to bring industrial production into rural and suburban areas near Detroit and bought many old flourmills and converted them to produce hydroelectricity to produce other products. The first opened in 1920 and others operated throughout the 1940s. MotorCities—Automotive National Heritage Area together with the University of Michigan Center for the Study of Auto Heritage, is looking for people who worked in these factories. If you worked at Cherry Hill, Nankin Mill, Northville, Plymouth, Newburg, Waterford, Saline, Flat Rock, Hayden Mills, Brooklyn, Manchester, Dundee Tecumseh, Milan or Sharon Mills they want to talk to you! Call Nancy at 313-259-3425.

The Michigan Society of Planning conference will be held October 16 at the Grand Traverse Resort and Professors Ted Ligibel and Robert Ward from the Preservation program at EMU will talk on "The Role of Historic Preservation in Comprehensive Planning."

Also participating are Amy Arnold from the Michigan SHPO and Oakland Township Planning Commissioner and Historic District Commissioner Janine Saputo. Learn more at www.planningmi.org.

In the Detroit area, a new website pinpoints 106 neighborhoods of historic interest (did you know there were so many?) Check out our www.citscapedetroit.org and then click on Neighborhoods. You will be amazed! Some of the areas highlighted are Conant Gardens, Rosedale Park, Five Points, LaSalle Gardens and the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. Other Detroit news is that William Worden of the Historic Advisory Board is working hard to keep the "Boblo Boat" (the "Steamer Columbia"), a National



The Adams House at Greenfield Village, formerly a Baptist parsonage in Saline. Photo: S. Wineberg.

Historic Landmark, in Detroit. And **Woodward Avenue** will get \$1 million for development after being designated a National Scenic Byway last year since it contains over 350 historic and cultural sites.

Lighthouse supporters will be happy to learn that **Governor Granholm** awarded more than \$1.2 million to nine communities for the preservation and restoration of their lighthouses. These communities are **Avon Township, Benzie County, Clay Township, Escanaba, Huron County Parks, Mackinaw City, City of Marquette, Presque Isle Township and Whitefish Township**. Governor Granholm also announced that **October** is **Family History Month** and this means that all activities at the Michigan Library and Historical Center in Lansing are free unless otherwise noted. Check out <http://Michigan.gov/hal>.

Kudos

The **Ann Arbor Street Exhibit Program** just keeps winning more awards. In early October, **Ray Detter** the Director of the program traveled to Cleveland with Susan Pollay of the DDA to accept an award from the **International Downtown Association** for its work in promoting public spaces. That same week he went to Port Huron with **Grace Shackman, Ilene Tyler**, and myself, to accept an Award of Merit from the Historical Society of Michigan. At that same meeting, **Lars Bjorn** of Ann Arbor (and my husband!) accepted an award for his book **Before Motown: A History of Jazz in Detroit, 1920-1960**.

The **Ann Arbor Historic District Commission** presented awards for 2001-2002 at a City Council meeting on September 15, 2003. **Centennial Awards** were given to **The Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union 190, The Ann Arbor University Women and Goetzcraft Printing**. **Preservation Awards**, which are given to owners who have maintained a historic house in excellent repair were given to: **Sally and Ian Bund** for the Goss House (1923) at 3215 W. Dobson Rd.; **Mary Palmer** for the William and Mary Palmer House, 227 Orchard Hills Drive (1952-Frank Lloyd Wright); **Fred and Edith Bookstein** for the Frieze House at 1547 Washtenaw Ave (1860); and **Peter Pleitner and Cynthia Hayward** for the Yoakum House at 2017 Hill St. (1927).

Rehabilitation Awards, which are awarded for good examples of proper restoration and repair were given to: **Tom Stulberg** for the

moving and restoration of the Kempfert House, 1335 Pontiac Trail (1890); **Thomas and Melanie McNicholas** for work at 837 Miller; **John Swales and Violet Benner**, 546 Fifth St (1917); **The University of Michigan** for work at Perry School (1902); **Allen and Kwan Commercial** for the John Maynard House, 218 N. Division (1844); and **Jeff and Christine Crockett** for their restoration of 506 E. Kingsley (1894).

Special Merit Awards were given to: **Mark Hodesh and Margaret Parker** for their landscaping of their business Downtown Home and Garden at 210 S. Ashley (1899/1912); **Matthew Banks and Jean Henry** for their renovation of the neighborhood store now known as Jefferson Market (1920) at 609 W. Jefferson; **First United Methodist Church** (1940) at 120 S. State Street, for their sensitive addition; **Leon and Delphine Tupper** for the restoration of the luster transom window at Ben and Jerry's, 304 S. State (1901); and **the Michigan Theater** (1927) for its restoration of the outer lobby and box office.

Two Projects were recognized as **Project of the Year**. For the year 2002, the award went to the Bank of Washtenaw Building ("Wooden Spoon"—RIP) dating to 1836 which was restored in a massive undertaking by its owner **Peter Bilakos**. For the year 2001, **The University of Michigan** received an award for the restoration of Lane Hall, 200 S. State (1917).

Program Schedule 2003-2004

Vice President and Program Chair **Ralph Beebe** has done a fantastic job of planning interesting programs and venues for the upcoming year. All programs are held the third Sunday of the month at 2 PM. The talks are free and open to the public. Members receive a post card before the meeting with instructions on how to reach the lecture. Light refreshments are served after the lecture.

SUNDAY • OCTOBER 19 • 2 PM
UNIVERSITY COMMONS
817 ASA GRAY DRIVE, ANN ARBOR

Lt. Michael Logghe, author of *The Crimes and the History of the Ann Arbor Police Department*, will speak about his book and some of the lurid crimes committed in Ann Arbor. Lt. Logghe is an engaging speaker and has lots of tales to tell.

SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 16 • 2 PM
GLACIER HILLS HANSEN ROOM
1200 EARHART RD.

Sabra Briere, Chair of the Lower Town Historic District Study Committee, will talk about historic preservation and the proposed **Lower Town Historic District**. Lower Town is the area on the north side of the Broadway Bridge which was once separate from Ann Arbor. It contains some of Ann Arbor's oldest homes, many of which are associated with the **Underground Railroad**.

SUNDAY • FEBRUARY 15 • 2 PM
SALINE DISTRICT LIBRARY
555 MAPLE RD.

Sue Kosky, WCHS Board Members, manager of our museum shop and one of our dedicated gardeners, will talk about her book, *Historic Saline*. This book is another item in the Arcadia Series on "Images of America" which **Grace Shackman's** books were part of as well.

SUNDAY • MARCH 21 • 2 PM
RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER
YPSILANTI • 76 N. HURON ST.

Barry LaRue, Ypsilanti City Council member and historic preservation activist, will lecture on *Ypsilanti's historic buildings*. He served for nine years on **Ypsilanti's Historic District Commission** and is a past board member of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation. He is also active on the board of the Riverside Arts Center, the 1909 former Masonic Temple. He and his wife live in a 150-year old house which they are lovingly restoring.

SUNDAY • APRIL 18 • 2 PM
COURTHOUSE SQUARE BUILDING
100 S. FOURTH AVENUE

Ray Detter, Louisa Pieper and Grace Shackman will talk about *the Downtown Street Exhibit Program*, that is getting rave reviews all over the U.S. and winning awards as well. You've probably noticed the glass markers in the sidewalks around town with old photographs of buildings no longer standing. A new group of 'frames' as they are called, which are scattered around the campus and deal with University history, was dedicated in July.

WEDNESDAY • MAY 19 • 6 PM
ANNUAL MEETING • TBA

Our Annual Meeting will be held this date. Location to be announced in the future.

Remember When?

An ongoing renovation at the NW corner of Main and Ann St. revealed that a former occupant had been the King Koin Launderette. The old turquoise blue paint job was revealed when paneling was removed and, in the spirit of our times, was obliterated and then covered



The King Koin Launderette revealed for a brief moment at the corner of Ann and Main in Ann Arbor. Photo: S. Wineberg

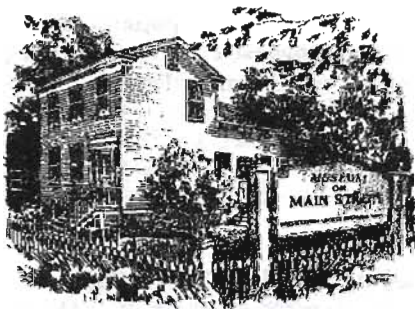
with a fake stone siding. We were lucky enough to hear about it in time to get a photo. The launderette opened in 1960. Anyone know when it closed?

Query

Don Limpert of Manchester is wondering where the GAR Welch Post #137 met and whether there are any pictures of members or events held by the post. He has a picture of the last post commander from 1930, Walter Jackson, who was one of the early founders of the UM School of Dentistry. Limpert is the last of the Freedom Township Limperts who settled in the township in 1834. You can reach him at delimpert@netzero.net or me at swines@umich.edu.

Support For The Impressions

This issue of the *Impressions* is co-sponsored by the Chelsea Milling Company of Chelsea, Michigan. Makers of Jiffy Mix



WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SPEAKER • SABRA BRIERE
SUNDAY • 2 PM
NOVEMBER 16, 2003
GLACIER HILLS • HANSEN ROOM
1200 EARHART ROAD

