



A heritage home: Eric Baxtreser examines a branding iron inside a carriage house adjacent to his home in Farmington. The carriage house, featured on the Farmington Heritage Home Tour, is built from hand-hewn timbers. Furniture and tools are some of the treasures stored in the carriage house.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRIDGES

Back in time

Homes reveal Farmington's heritage

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
SPECIAL WRITER

Farmington's home tour offers a little variety from the kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms that everyone might expect.

This year the Farmington Area Heritage Home tour will also include a 170-year-old barn filled with farm tools, some of which, were used when the structure was built by Luther Green in the 1820s or 1830s.

"It's incredible that it's standing there for all these years," explained Earl Baxtreser, who lives in the nearby house, also built by Green.

"I feel like a caretaker of a piece of history not only for Farmington, but for the public," he added.

Farming in the community

The barn is one of eight structures, mostly built in the 19th century Victorian and Greek Revival styles, that will be included on this year's tour.

"We get upwards of 600 to 700 people," explained Steve Olson, Farmington Historic District Committee member.

"It's a mix of people interested in history and people interested in home decorating," Olson said. "As the community keeps growing, we think it's interesting to see where we've come from."

Pointing to the "farm," in Farmington and Farmington Hills, Olson said: "A lot of these houses are farm houses."

The tour includes the following structures:

■ Governor Warner Mansion, 33805 Grand River Avenue, was built in the Victorian Italianate style with a shuttered belvedere by P.D. and Rhoda Warner, adoptive parents of Fred Warner in 1867. Fred Warner was governor of Michigan, from 1905 to 1911.

Later, it was the home of the governor's eldest daughter, Edessa Sisum, and her family. After she died, it became the Farmington Historical Museum.

The grounds include a two-story carriage house, beautifully maintained gardens and a gazebo. Family furnishings may still be seen in the museum, which is in the National Register of Historic Places.

■ The 1850's House, 33224 Oakland, is a two-story blue and white house with three porches, two fireplaces and, interestingly, a door on each of its four sides. While the property changed hands several times in the 19th century, a record of the sale in 1853 makes the first reference to a structure. Members of the Power, Mansfield, Stewart and Bostick families owned it during this period. Records indicate it may have served as a coopers shop or a school.

The house remained virtually unchanged for more than 135 years. In 1985 it received modern insulation, aluminum siding and an addition.

■ The Luther Green Barn, 21085 Halsted, was built by Luther Green,

one of the pioneer settlers in Farmington. The barn and the Greek Revival farmhouse to the north is on what was once a 160-acre farm.

The barn stored tools and animals and, even today, it's still used to house equipment and tools.

"It's sort of like a museum that houses the tools that made that place tick for the last 150 years," said Baxtreser whose grandparents, Bill and Jean Barthel, moved to the area 65 years ago. Leo Barthel, Baxtreser's uncle, owns the barn.

"It's an educational piece where people can glimpse something that happened," Baxtreser said. "It might be informative and helpful to them to realize how we got to where we are today."

Around 1915, a wealthy attorney for the Chrysler Corporation, Harry Bulkley, bought the property and ran the farm as a "gentleman farmer" on the weekends.

"He built all the big structures on that property," Baxtreser said. "In 1917 this area was definitely way out in nowhere."

Bulkley converted the old barn into a carriage house for his Oakland automobile and had an upstairs apartment built for the chauffeur.

Please see TOUR, C2

Farmington Heritage Home Tour

What: Home tour features eight homes or structures, many of which were built in the 19th century Victorian and Greek Revival styles. Money raised from the Heritage Home Tour will benefit the Farmington Historical Society, Farmington Historical Commission and Farmington Hills Historical Commission.

When: 1-5 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 15-16

Tickets: Advance tickets sold for \$10 at Farmington City Hall, 23600 Liberty; Farmington Hills City Hall, 31555 11 Mile Road; Gov. Warner Mansion, 33805 Grand River Avenue; and Metrobank locations at 37000 Grand River and 34391 W. 12 Mile Road. Tickets are \$12 the days of the event, available at the Gov. Warner Mansion. For more information, call (248) 626-8264.

Northville Historical Home Tour

What: The tour features five homes more than 100 years old and is sponsored by the American Association of University Women Northville-Novl branch.

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 15, the same weekend of Northville's Victorian Festival.

Tickets: \$10 in advance and \$12 the day of the tour at Gardenviews, 202 W. Main, and Morrison's Antiques, 105 E. Main, in Northville. There is a 1,000 person limit for the tour.

Northville tour can be walked

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI
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Organizers of the Northville Historical Home Tour hope they've made this year's tour a little easier for visitors.

They've created a 1 1/2-mile walking tour they hope will ease worries of visitors who drive around Northville looking for the tour's houses, then search for parking places at each stop.

Shoe covers will be provided for participants, which eliminates the need for guests to continuously take shoes off when entering the homes, according to Barbara Wilson, the home tour chairperson for the American Association of University Women Northville-Novl branch.

"We ask people not to take children under 12 which includes babies in any carriers," Wilson said, adding that pets, picture taking, smoking, eating and drinking in the homes are not allowed.

The tour includes these homes:

■ The Dixon Home, on West Dunlap, was built in the late 1800s. Years later it was used for the Northville Methodist Church parsonage.

The Gallagher family bought the house from the church in 1927. They added a room on the back for what they thought would be a beauty parlor, but, the city wouldn't allow the property to be used that way, Wilson said.

The two-story building was purchased by its current owners who have lived there since January.

■ The Kennedy Home, on Randolph, may have been built in 1868. The Steenken family were the first owners of this two-story, simple farm house that sits on the road in front of the landmark log house.

In 1825 President John Quincy Adams deeded a number of acres to a man named Aldrich, who sold it to the Steenken family.

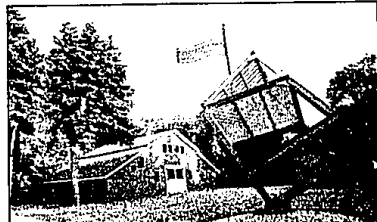
"The Kennedys have lived there for eight years and have done extensive remodeling while keeping the front of the house the way it was," Wilson said.

"They added onto the back and built a garage with a carriage house above it, which fits in with the time period."

■ The Payne Home, on High Street, was built in 1880 by James Dubuar, who also owned the well-known lumber business on Main and Griswold. "His lumber was used for most of the homes in the Northville Historic District," Wilson said.

This two-story building is "painted like a Victorian lady with five colors," she said, pointing to the two dominant

Please see WALK, C2



Still standing: The estate that the carriage house is on is surrounded by gardens and sculpture. This huge steel wind vane once separated rock and gravel in a yard of a construction company.



A look back: The Wixom-Marlette House at 38285 Twelve Mile Road, was built around 1835 and features maples over 100 years old.



Easy access: The 1850s house at 33224 Oakland is a two-story blue and white house with three porches and doors on each of its four sides.



Historical style: The Governor Warner Mansion, 33805 Grand River, was built in the Victorian Italianate style.

INSIDE



MARTY FIGLEY

Tending to detail

Harry Thron of Redford man pays great attention to detail and variety in his garden.

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JOE GAGNON

More attention needed:

When appliances are defective, consumers get angry and manufacturers' reputations suffer.

See Home Work, Page 4



HOMETOWN LIFE:

Hiddur Mi'zavah:

The Sisterhood of Adat Shalom got an early start on celebrating the Jewish holidays last week.

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