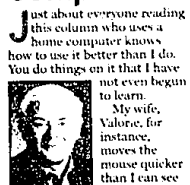


# Computers soon will start appliances



**Appliance Doctor**  
Joe Gagnon

Just about everyone reading this column who uses a home computer knows how to use it better than I do. You do things on it that I have not even begun to learn. My wife, Valorie, for instance, moves the mouse quicker than I can see the pointer and I'm always going in reverse to relearn what she has taught me. The manufacturers tell us that appliances soon will incorporate much of this computer technology as appliances will be programmed from work or through a phone line. Builders are already wiring new homes to accept this high tech product of the future and production has already started on some lines of appliances. This old timer is having a difficult time in accepting these changes.

I have always believed that operating appliances should have someone near them at most times. What happens when some yo yo breaks into the computer system and starts your stove while you are on vacation? What about the man who calls you on the phone and says he is shutting down your access to the Internet service which is going to serve these products? This happened to me recently when Kevin called to tell me he was shutting me down because there were bugs in my home computer and it was sending out spam. I joked with him that I could spray it with a can of Raid and that Spam wasn't so bad if you cooked it in a frying pan.

Seriously, this is no laughing matter when your computer is down for a week. I had to have a computer genius come over to my house named David and remove a whole bunch of bad guys. I mean, there was a lot of them from as far away as Russia. Where did these people come from? I didn't invite

them over and who ever gave them the right to climb inside my computer. David informed me that some of these creeps can see everything I do on the computer. I asked if they could see Val paying the bills and transferring money through her accounts. Yep, they sure can and they can steal an identity in just a matter of minutes. This theft can be harmful to a person's credit and it's one of the top consumer complaints in the country and rising.

I will report on the cost of these products and the expense and frequency of repairs. Unless the manufacturers provide some sort of enticing warranty which covers repairs for a five-year period, you can expect to hear of some outrageous repair bills on newer appliances.

We will see, won't we? Joe Gagnon is host of Ask The Handyman on Infinity Radio AM 1270 8 a.m.-noon Saturdays and Sundays. You can hear his tips on WWJ 950 on weekdays. You can call him on his show at (248) 356-1270.

# HISTORIC

FROM PAGE C1  
house.  
I was given a lot of support by the neighbors, the historical societies and the township," he said.

While preserving the beautiful stone exterior, Ouellette brought the interior up to 2003 standards. The house now has lots of electrical wiring, lines for computers in every room, air conditioning, two furnaces, a second-floor laundry and all kinds of closet space.

The exterior walls are of dressed field stone. Each stone was cut smooth on five sides, allowing the craftsman who built the house to put the stone in courses, rather like contemporary bricks.

## THEMES, COLORS

The house has several themes. The most obvious is the beautiful stonework. Other themes are horses, prairie-style doors and windows and the oak and acorn, which echo the old trees outside and is the main wood of the house. The acorn can be seen on the brass door hinges throughout the house, as well as a porch detail. Much of the house's interior matches the calm gray-pink introduced in the front room. The kitchen is painted green, with a stone floor. Ouellette put up natural wood cabinets



THE GERMAN HOUSE IN WEST BLOOMFIELD WAS GIVEN NEW LIFE BY HISTORY BUFF TOM OUELLETTE AND HIS WIFE, MARIAN. THE HOUSE, BUILT IN THE LATE 1840s, HAD BEEN CONDEMNED BY THE TOWNSHIP. IT NOW HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A RESIDENCE A CONTEMPORARY FAMILY WOULD ENJOY, WHILE MANY OF ITS HISTORIC FEATURES HAVE BEEN PRESERVED.

that match the oak of the stone-topped island. A modern stainless steel sink interrupts the stone-topped counter beneath a wide window. The detailed baseboards and the rest of the woodwork in the eating area are white against the painted walls.

Today's German House is actually two sections, one old, the other contemporary. You can hardly tell which is which from the inside because interior walls of the old section of the house look just like any other walls in a contemporary house.

## ADDITIONS

The house retains the dressed stone walls of the original German House, but before Ouellette started rebuilding it, the house was small by contemporary standards — beautiful, but still a bit cramped.

So Ouellette decided to add the rear section, retaining the existing roof line. That new section contains two large bedrooms and a "back" stairway that runs to the first floor and a modern kitchen and an attached garage.

The old narrow stairs in the living room were widened, covered with the same carpeting as the living room and given natural oak banisters. The stairs lead to a second story that includes both the old section of the house and the new section.

The second floor has three bedrooms and a master suite. Each smaller bedroom is painted its own color: sunny yellow, muted lavender, light blue.

Each room is accented by white woodwork. Most of the colors throughout the house were selected by Ouellette's wife, Marian.

# GERMAN

FROM PAGE C1

in childbirth. William remarried, and by 1850, had two children — and a need for a house. That's probably when the stone house was built. William German's family eventually grew to seven children and two live-in "domestics." When William died in his mid 40s, his wife and children moved to Lake Orion to be near her family. William's brother John moved into the now-empty

house, keeping it in the family. The house wasn't large, but it had stone exterior walls that were built by a skilled stone mason. You can tell the mason was skilled because the field stone that makes up the exterior walls was trimmed and laid. That kind of work isn't cheap. And the lumber that makes up the house is almost entirely oak, a sturdy, pretty and expensive wood.

"This isn't a typical family home of the time. The family was influential, if not affluent," rebuilder Tom Ouellette said. John Jr. added rooms and a foundation on the west side of

the house, converting the old door into an interior archway. The addition also had stone exterior walls, probably done by the same man who built the walls in the original building.

What has become known as the German House stayed in the German family until the early 1950s. It changed hands a couple of times, until it was bought and rebuilt by Ouellette.

You may know the name German better from the German Fractional School District. That school was built on the land owned by the German family.

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