Community Support Comes Together Around Preservation
City mobilizes “4B’s” to look at saving 1832 Greek Revival Barton Farmhouse

Today...
The property on which the Barton Farmhouse sits has been sold to a developer who wants to see it preserved – but at another location.
The developer offered the historic farmhouse to the City at the time residents were planning their 75th Anniversary – and realizing that their history touches the broader community. Mayor Pat Hardy called together a unique meeting of her Commissioners, the Boards of Bloomfield Township and the Bloomfield Hills Schools, as well as the Bloomfield Historical Society (The 4B’s) to discuss its future. The 4B’s have created a study committee that is evaluating the possibility of moving the Farmhouse to the Schools’ Bowers Farm – which doesn’t have a real farmhouse.
The Schools are actively investigating the expanded community-wide educational opportunities at the Bowers Farm that the addition of the Farmhouse would present.

Plans call for funding to come from the private sector including community groups, companies and individuals.

Now a little history...
On the Tenth of November, 1821, in the forty-sixth year of Independence of the United States, John Wetmore of Monroe County New York registered his purchase of the original 160 acres where the Barton Farmhouse now stands. Recorded in Certificate number 50 at the Detroit branch of the General Land Office, it was one of sev-

(Continued on page 3)

SPECIAL COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE
AT THE 1832 BARTON FARMHOUSE
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 4 from 2-4 PM
586 East Long Lake  Suggested donation of $18.32 per family.

Township Continues Commitment to Wing Lake School
On September 10, 2007, the Trustees of the Charter Township of Bloomfield continued a community commitment they had begun in 1976 and voted to approve $100,000 toward the restoration of the historic 1859 stone Wing Lake Schoolhouse. When combined with additional funds, the old Schoolhouse will return to its rightful place as a true educational and Community resource as the Wing Lake School Historical Centre. This was the designation given to it by the Bloomfield Community’s 1976 Bi-Centennial Commission which included representatives from the Township, the Schools and the Library as well as members of a number of community organizations. Your Society is pleased to be playing a continuing role in the restoration process. If you are interested in taking an active part in this process, send a note to: info@bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org.

For More on the Barton Farmhouse ...
Next Local History/Local Resources Program is December 2
Presented to
Harry C. Walsh
By appreciation for your knowledge, guidance and contributions in making the 75th Anniversary of the City of Bloomfield Hills a memorable moment in time.
September 16, 2007

Making History
Bloomfield Hills Celebrates 75 Years as a City;
Woodward Avenue turns 200

The nationally renowned City of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan celebrated its 75th Anniversary on Sunday, September 16, 2007 at the Cranbrook Educational Community.
Known by many names: Bagley’s Corners, Circle City and Bloomfield Centre, the Village of Bloomfield Hills officially became a City in 1932 upon adoption of its City Charter.

... Woodward Avenue, the Nation’s oldest byway, is inextricably linked to the City because as Woodward developed, city dwellers were able to travel Northward from Detroit for fresh air and relaxed country living.

The early farms and orchards gave way to the Estate Era, when men of vision and high ideals like George Booth, E. P. Hammond, W. T. Barbour, Walter Briggs and Sebastian Kresge bought huge parcels of land for summer retreats.

Today, the City is home to industry titans, political leaders, a veritable “who’s who” of Americana as well as many historic homes dating back to the turn of the Twentieth Century.

Excerpts of Remarks entered into the Congressional Record

... come with me in these days of fall
And stand with me in October’s hall
And you’ll vow it fails by a thousand thrills
To equal the charm of the Bloomfield Hills

“Bloomfield Hills” Edgar A. Guest
(In the Birmingham Eccentric. October 30, 1925)

An Honor for One of Our Own
(“Where’s Harry?”)

On a perfectly beautiful September Sunday afternoon the cry went up in the middle of the formal program celebrating the City of Bloomfield Hills’ 75th Anniversary with Mayor Pat Hardy at the mike: “Where’s Harry?”

The Mayor was trying to present a handsome gold Key to the City to real estate veteran Harry Walsh as a leading Bloomfield Hills citizen. His help in uncovering Bloomfield Hills’ history was invaluable to the Mayor and her Committee for the planned celebratory picnic. But Harry had disappeared. So his plaque was accepted for him by a colleague who had worked in Harry’s firm.

Another incident was earlier when Society members Katie Kiyo and Dwight Diener found Chuck Kirkpatrick’s lost nametag stuck to the sidewalk. That was how they knew for sure another Bloomfield Historical Society member was present for the long-planned festivities at Cranbrook House — the official picnic. More than 800 residents of zip code 48304 had turned out, including notables Brooks Patterson, Dave Payne and Joe Knollenberg and his guest, Bernard Jenkin, an M.P. from Great Britain, who were introduced by the Mayor. Copies of Bloomfield Blossoms, a must-have for everyone from the Bloomfield-Birmingham area who loves history and vintage photos, were available, along with a keepsake program designed by Kay Brophy and printed by Howard Brophy.

Another handout was a pictorial map suggested by Harry Walsh: “What is it? Where is it?” showing the location of Saarinen House, the Vaughan House, Bagley Inn, The Waterwheel, the One-way Bridge, and other storied historic locations in Bloomfield Hills.

Mostly it was a splendid revisiting of acquaintances from over the years.

By Gretchen and Chuck Kirkpatrick
A Little History (Continued from page 1)

eral purchases Wetmore made and sold in the area, presumably at a profit.
Young James D. Benjamin bought the property in 1844. Perhaps Benjamin built or modified the original house as he developed the farm and raised a family. Constructed in the Greek Revival style, the Farmhouse reflects the dominant American domestic architecture of the period of the 1830s - 1860s.

According to A Field Guide to American Houses, "Architectural models evocative of Greek democracy were thought to be especially appropriate to the new American Republic as it rejected traditional ties to England in the decades following the War of 1812."

Bloomfield remained a quiet rural farm community until well past the Civil War. Oakland County farmers “tilled more land than in any other county in Michigan, grew more potatoes, corn and wheat (exported to world markets as a top-grade product). They churned more butter and herded more cattle.” But that was about to change.

Detroit had been experiencing rapid growth – from 50,000 to more than a million in four decades. Many of its business leaders had begun moving out of Detroit and Grosse Pointe to the “Hills of Bloomfield.” The area offered open land on which to ride and hunt and build estates or “country homes”.

For the past seventy years the Farmhouse has been owned by the Carl Barton family, headed by the founder of the internationally famous Barton Malow construction company. Two of Carl’s daughters have pledged $30,000 toward saving the Farmhouse.

There’ll be much more detail on the Barton Farmhouse and its fascinating history at our December 2 Program (see page 4).

A Home for the Society?
If the Barton Farmhouse is moved tentative plans call for it to become a permanent home for the Bloomfield Historical Society in addition to its other planned uses. There might be room for a small museum with displays telling the story of Bloomfield history. Stay tuned.

The latest on the Fox and Hounds
Once the center of the Bloomfield area social scene, the classic Tudor building with its long history is being demolished and replaced by a new combined office and retail building. Details are still being worked out by the developer and the City but it is hoped that there will be architectural cues reminiscent of the Fox and Hounds Inn with its golden-roofed Tower. The Society has been active in uncovering and preserving as much of the history of the building as we can and hope to present it to the community sometime in the future.

The history of the Fox and Hounds, along with that of the Barton Farmhouse, has taught us much more about the inter-connectedness of the Bloomfield area and the people who’ve lived here.

The City of Bloomfield Hills is opening the Farmhouse to you and your family and friends for a tour on Sunday, November 4, from 2 to 4 p.m. Members of the Historical Society will be present to answer questions. You’ll have a rare opportunity to see an early Bloomfield Greek Revival home that may have been built as early as 1832 and that has been added on to gradually over the years – without losing its original character and charm.

At the moment, the home is at the edge of a construction site – so wear appropriate clothes, Greek Revival homes often have second floors with lower than normal ceilings and doors.

Depending on the weather, some of the four-footed residents of the Bowers Farm will put in an appearance for youngsters (and their parents) to get to know up close and personal and exchange an oink or baa or two. There’ll also be complimentary cider and donuts, Smokey’s, a hot dog vendor, will be on hand selling dogs, brats and chips along with Cousin Don’s farm-grown produce. There’ll even be music by “The Blues Man” Paul Miles.

In short – it’ll be an excellent adventure. A chance to get to know some of your local history “in the raw” and – hopefully – get interested in helping to preserve it for future generations.
The Bloomfield Historical Society Board

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Bloomfield Historical Society is dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the rich history of the Bloomfield area by identifying, promoting and conserving our heritage. We encourage research to educate and engage all generations.

www.bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org
info@bloomfieldhistoricalsociety.org

Next LH/LR Program is December 2:
The Historic Barton Farmhouse

Learn about the history of the property, from its first purchase from the government in 1821 to its status today.

Meet the fascinating families who’ve lived there and how they have shaped, and reflected, the history of the Bloomfield area.

Then, learn about the importance to a community of the preservation of its most significant historical assets from Ron Campbell AIA. Ron is Principal Planner with the Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services office. In his background as a practicing preservation architect, Ron has been responsible for such renovation projects as the restoration of the Lapeer County Courthouse.

This presentation is another in the Local History/Local Resources Series, jointly sponsored by the Bloomfield Historical Society and the Bloomfield Township Public Library. It is open to the public at no charge. Contact the Library at 248.642.5800 or www.btplt.org with any questions.

Sunday, December 2 from 3 to 4:30 PM at the Bloomfield Township Offices 4200 Telegraph

Please join us!