



Lady in pink

By MEGAN VEIT
Staff Writer

Local keeps Victorian era alive

Doris Orphal Weber has spent the past 12 years "bringing the beauty back" to her home on Willipie Street, The Painted Lady.

The name, she explains, is "used to describe a Victorian Home with more than three colors" on its façade.

With the help of husband, Kenny Weber, Doris Weber first started restoring the home, bringing back the essence of its 1868 origin. Beginning in 1995, the couple started spending time in the Victorian home learning about the era in which it was built, as well as extensively researching the home's origins.

Doris Weber credits her mother with saving the house. The 1945 purchase, one of only two times in the home's history where money was used to complete the transaction, came at a time when Auglaize County officials were looking for more parking space.

Considering the neighboring homes' demolition, Doris Weber said she believes that if the home had not been converted into a five one-bedroom apartment complex by her parents, the Victorian

beauty would have been destroyed as well.

While maintaining the origin design of the home, the Webers enhanced it with fresh coats of paint, restored chimneys and an updated cresting for their widow's walk.

The work is a labor of love performed as much as possible by the two over their years of residing in the home, Doris Weber said.

Ken Weber devoted two months of full-time labor to converting the basement into another living quarters, complete with fireplace. The Webers' interest in the history of their house became an area of intense interest, leading to their travels to 92 bed and breakfasts across the United States.

Doris Weber describes the experience as a way to share her home with new friends with a similar passion.

"When I show them pictures of our home, they're floored," the homeowner said.

Doris Weber admitted she, too, is floored by the

innings visited during her travels.

"I can't go into one of them without finding something I want," Doris Weber said.

Since beginning their bed and breakfast travels, the Webers have also tried to share their knowledge of the Victorian era with the community. The Painted Lady is often toured by interested tourists and passers-by, each encountering the interior that is largely authentic and original to the home.

"My father lowered the ceilings from 11 to nine feet to save on heating," Doris Weber said, addressing one of the few changes made to the home.

The couple also purchased a Model A Ford, which they use in area parades. When riding, the pair is often dressed in Vic-

torian costume. Decorations found in the yard and on the widow's walk, as well as throughout the home, speak of the house's unique history.

A horse and buggy in the front lawn are dedicated to the Berlin family, two generations of physicians who resided and practiced in the home during the early 1900s.

It was through these decorations that a granddaughter of Fredrick Berlin found the home. The granddaughter presented the Webers with a metal tub for transporting documents and X-rays, used by both father and son during their medical practices.

The Webers hope to continue living in the Painted Lady, providing they are not overcome by the funds required to heat the large home. Should they need to move, Doris Weber said they would continue to keep ownership the home, so that they may give it to their daughter, to ensure the future of the building.

On right, Doris Weber sits in her Victorian-themed living room at her home at 106 Willipie St. Top, Weber's home is dubbed The Painted Lady because it is a Victorian home painted more than three colors on its façade; center, Weber's living room is filled with items circa 1868 to bring back the house's origins; below, Weber dances with classmate Neil Armstrong at the pair's 60th class reunion on June 16 at the Country Charm restaurant.

Staff photos/ Megan Veit; photo of Weber and Armstrong provided

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